National Center for Children in Poverty
Columbia University
MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Map and Track

State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood

1999 Edition

Stanley N. Bernard
Jane Knitzer

Introduction by
David Cohen

NCCP National Center for Children in Poverty
Columbia University
MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) was established in 1989 at the School of Public Health, Columbia University, with core support from the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Center's mission is to identify and promote strategies that reduce the number of young children living in poverty in the United States, and that improve the life chances of the millions of children under age six who are growing up poor.

The Center:

- Alerts the public to demographic statistics about child poverty and to the scientific research on the serious impact of poverty on young children, their families, and their communities.
- Designs and conducts field-based studies to identify programs, policies, and practices that work best for young children and their families living in poverty.
- Disseminates information about early childhood care and education, child health, and family and community support to government officials, private organizations, and child advocates, and provides a state and local perspective on relevant national issues.
- Brings together public and private groups to assess the efficacy of current and potential strategies to lower the young child poverty rate and to improve the well-being of young children in poverty, their families, and their communities.
- Challenges policymakers and opinion leaders to help ameliorate the adverse consequences of poverty on young children.

NCCP Marks Decade of Achievement: 1989–1999

In 1999, NCCP celebrates ten years of committed effort to identify and promote strategies to reduce the young child poverty rate and to improve the life chances of the millions of young children still living in poverty. "We can take pride in the accomplishments of the Center in raising the profile of poor young children and putting them on the agenda of urgent social issues facing this country," says the Center's director, Dr. J. Lawrence Aber. "But we cannot be satisfied until America has made far greater progress in combating young child poverty," Aber added. He notes the inspiration and hard work of the Center's founding director, Judith E. Jones, in this achievement, and thanks the Center's funders and Council of Advisors for sharing the vision of the Center and supporting its work.

Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood, 1999 Edition

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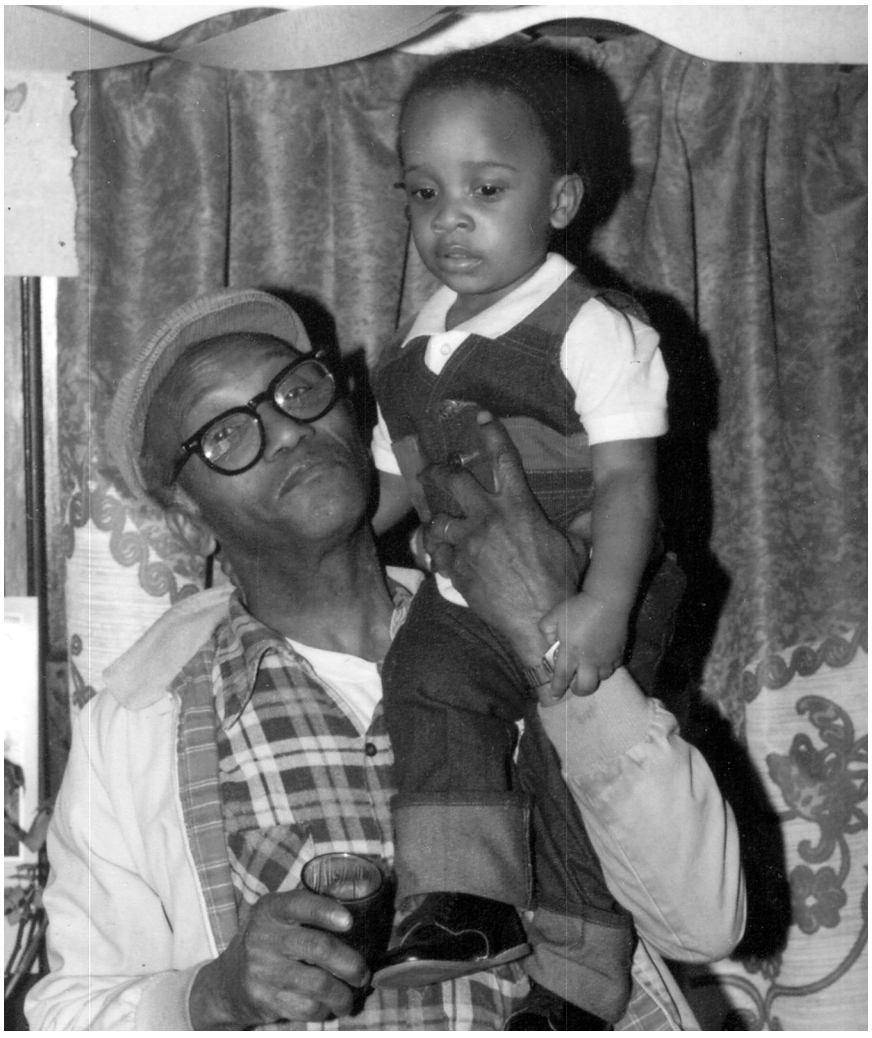
We recognize that even though a father's financial support is critically necessary, it is not sufficient for a child's well-being.

Governor Paul Celluci, 1999
State of Massachusetts

Fathers are much more than breadwinners. They lay an important foundation for the emotional, psychological, and physical development of their children. A father's presence and positive interaction in a child's life promotes healthy families as well as safe and stable communities.

Governor Parris Glendening, 1999
State of Maryland



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The Authors

Stanley N. Bernard is director for administration and human resources at NCCP and leads the Center's work on fatherhood issues. He is the father of Jacinthe and Stanley E.J.

Dr. Jane Knitzer is deputy director of the National Center for Children in Poverty, noted lecturer, and author of numerous books assessing public policy.

David Cohen is a British journalist who came to the United States two years ago as a Harkness Fellow of the Commonwealth Fund of New York and as a resident scholar at NCCP to study fatherhood in the United States, especially the changing role of fathers in low-income families and communities.

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The Changing View of Fatherhood

"What makes an absent, uninvolved father change his behavior and take on his paternal responsibilities—physically, emotionally, and financially?" This question, asked by David Cohen in the introduction to this report, is a complex one. His analysis, drawing on social science "tipping point theory," which is used to explain the spread of epidemics as well as social ideas, suggests that peer pressure, religious leaders, community programs, and corporate culture all play a role. So, too, do larger social norms. And so, too, do state policies and practices. Through them, states have the opportunity to help define social expectations about fatherhood and develop policies and strategies that can benefit not just fathers, but most importantly, their children.

Recognizing this, in 1997, the National Center for Children in Poverty, with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, produced *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood.* At that time, every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had at least one policy or program initiative to promote and encourage responsible fatherhood. It is now two years later. Evidence from the larger society suggests that there is a cultural change in the way fathers are viewed and view themselves. The people expressing the new view vary widely, from rappers who sing about the joys and responsibilities of fatherhood to employees of corporations who admit to struggling to balance work and family life. Given these larger social changes, this edition of *Map and Track Fathers* explores how the states are responding.

The 1999 edition of *Map and Track Fathers* addresses four questions that are central to developing an understanding of state strategies to promote responsible fatherhood:

- To what extent are state policies and practices responsive to the complex demographic picture of fatherhood that is emerging?
- What specific strategies are states developing to promote responsible fatherhood, and how do these strategies vary from state to state and from those used two years ago?
- To what extent are states providing leadership in developing policies and practices that promote responsible fatherhood, from an economic, social, and psychological perspective?
- What are the lessons from the current status of state efforts to promote responsible fatherhood for future state efforts?

The *Map and Track Fathers* Framework and Methodology

To answer the questions, this report provides two sets of information:

- National and state-by-state indicators that give a profile of fathers and fatherhood in each state, examining such indicators as family structure, employment, educational attainment, poverty status, and state activity in collecting child support; and
- Aggregate and state-by-state information on the policies and practices regarding responsible fatherhood, using the *Map and Track Fathers* framework. For each state, five specific strategies are tracked:
    1. Promoting public awareness about responsible fatherhood;
    2. Preventing unwanted or too-early fatherhood;
    3. Enhancing fathers as economic providers;
    4. Strengthening fathers as nurturers; and
    5. Promoting leadership capacity.

The five sets of strategies are based on research on state and local programs and policy as well as research on the importance of responsible fathering in child development. For consistency of tracking, the clusters are the same as those used in the first edition. (See Map 1 for a summary of state efforts to encourage responsible fatherhood.)

The research methodology for *Map and Track Fathers* builds on previous editions in the series. Two questionnaires on state fatherhood initiatives were sent to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. (See Appendix A.) The first questionnaire was general, asking states to update information from the 1997 edition and to describe in detail any new programs. A second questionnaire was sent specifically to administrators of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to determine the links between fatherhood and welfare programs and whether states are planning to use Welfare-to-Work (WtW) funds to provide education and job training to nonresident fathers of children receiving welfare. Demographic data were analyzed by NCCP's Demography Unit, utilizing information from the March Current Population Surveys collected annually by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (see Appendices C and D). Site visits were also made to three states to profile their efforts to address fatherhood issues. These, along with examples of city and county leadership, reflect the multiple pathways that policymakers and program designers can take to promote responsible fatherhood.

The analysis is based on responses from 45 states.* (Seven states—Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and West Virginia—did not respond). The response rate for this edition was somewhat less than in 1997, when 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico responded to either a questionnaire sent out by NCCP (47 states) or one sent by the Council of Governors' Policy Advisors (five states).

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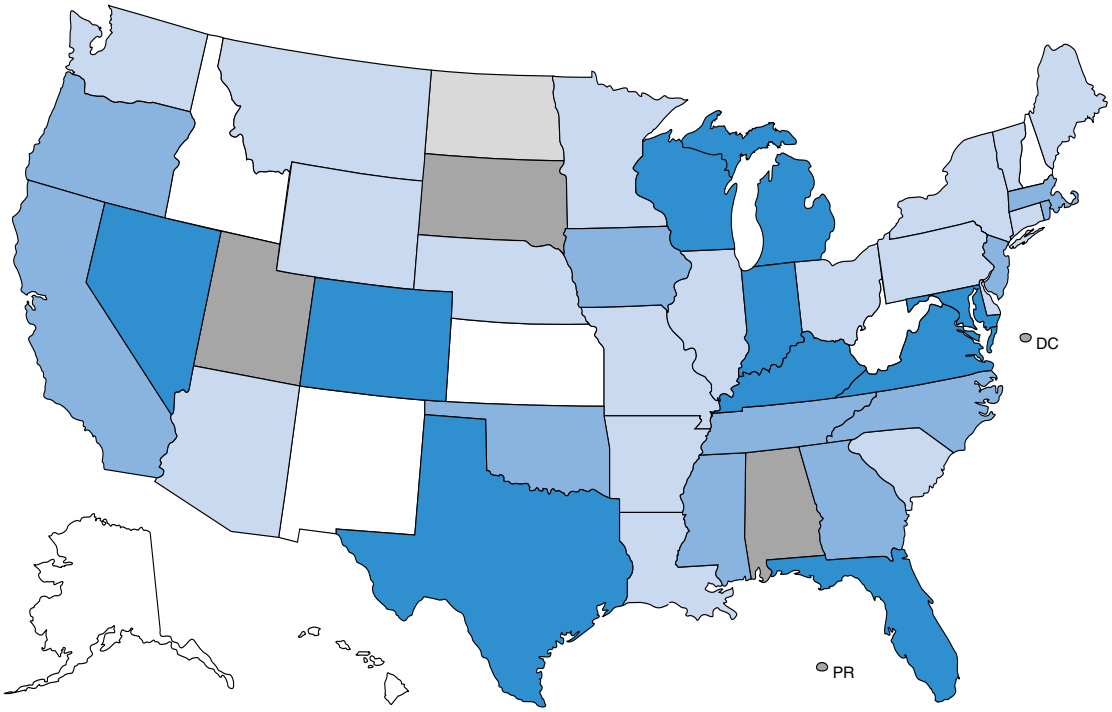
* The term 'states' in this report includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico unless otherwise noted.

Map 1: Level of Reported State Effort* to Promote Responsible Fatherhood



State reports implementing one of the five strategies—1 state

State reports implementing two of the five strategies—5 states

State reports implementing three of the five strategies—18 states

State reports implementing four of the five strategies—11 states

State reports implementing five of the five strategies—10 states

States not responding to the 1999 NCCP Fatherhood Survey—7 states

Note: The map does not include pilot or planned initiatives. See Appendix B for a table of all state-reported initiatives, including pilot and planned initiatives. (State refers to all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.)

*Level of reported state effort is defined as implementing strategies intended to:

- Promote Public Awareness About Responsible Fatherhood
- Prevent Unwanted or Too-Early Fatherhood
- Enhance Fathers as Economic Providers
- Strengthen Fathers as Nurturers
- Promote Leadership Capacity

Level of Reported State Effort to Promote Responsible Fatherhood					
State reports implementing one of the five strategies—1 state	North Dakota				
State reports implementing two of the five strategies—5 states	Alabama District of Columbia	Puerto Rico South Dakota	Utah		
State reports implementing three of the five strategies—18 states	Arizona Arkansas Connecticut Delaware	Illinois Louisiana Maine Minnesota	Missouri Montana Nebraska New York	Ohio Pennsylvania South Carolina Vermont	Washington Wyoming
State reports implementing four of the five strategies—11 states	California Georgia Iowa	Massachusetts Mississippi New Jersey	North Carolina Oklahoma Oregon	Rhode Island Tennessee	
State reports implementing five of the five strategies—10 states	Colorado Florida	Indiana Kentucky	Maryland Michigan	Nevada Texas	Virginia Wisconsin
States not responding to the 1999 NCCP Fatherhood Survey—7 states	Alaska Hawaii	Idaho Kansas	New Hampshire New Mexico	West Virginia	

How *Map and Track Fathers* Is Organized

The 1999 edition of *Map and Track Fathers* is organized into five chapters. To set a larger social context, the introduction, "The State Dads Are In," gives a societal view of fatherhood and describes the process by which public perception can change regarding responsible fatherhood. The introduction was written by David Cohen, an award-winning journalist from the United Kingdom who is spending two years studying fatherhood issues in the United States.

Chapter 1, "About *Map and Track Fathers*," provides an overview of the framework and the methods used to collect the data for the report. Chapter 2, "The Faces of Fatherhood," provides demographic findings and offers a qualitative look at the changing face of fatherhood nationally, highlighting particular subgroups of fathers. Chapter 3, "Dads in the States," summarizes the program and policy information gathered from the states and explores a set of emerging issues not so clearly reflected in the findings. Chapter 4, "State Leadership in Action," focuses on profiles of three states, one county, and one city providing leadership with fatherhood initiatives that reflect attention to a range of fathers and both the economic and nurturing aspects of fatherhood. Chapter 5 provides profiles of the individual states and gives a state-by-state overview of policies and initiatives reported by them. The key findings are highlighted below.

A National Profile of Fathers

Fathers, Children, and Families

There has been little change in the demographic profile of fathers since the previous edition of *Map and Track Fathers.*

- The proportion of children living in families where only the mother is present has remained around 24 percent from 1996 to 1998, accounting for about 17 million children in those years.
- The proportion of father-only families among all single-parent families rose slightly from 14 percent in 1996 to 16 percent in 1998, but remains 4 percent of all family types.
- Over the past decade, however, there has been a 76 percent increase in the percentage of children being raised in father-only families.
- Among mothers in mother-only families, 42 percent had never married and half (50 percent) were divorced or separated. Fathers in father-only families were more likely to be divorced or separated (57 percent) than never-married (34 percent).
- Within the states, the proportion of children living in mother-headed families was highest in the District of Columbia, with 56 percent. The percentage of children living in father-headed families was highest in Alaska, with 6 percent.

Fathers, Children, and Work

Common sense and research data both suggest that economic security for children is key to promoting their well-being.

- In 1997, most children under age 18 with working fathers had fathers who worked full-time (86 percent). About 28 percent of children had mothers who did not work.

Fathers, Children, and Schooling

Parental education is important to children, because there are direct links between schooling, employment, and family economic well-being.

- Between 1994 and 1998, 31 percent of U.S. children had fathers with only a high school education, and almost 54 percent had fathers who had gone beyond high school. Thirty-four percent of children had mothers with only a high school education, while 49 percent had mothers with more than a high school education.
- Of the states, California had the highest proportion of children whose fathers had less than a high school education (28 percent).

Fathers, Children, and Poverty

Growing up in poverty is a major risk factor for the well-being of children.

- From 1993 to 1997, an average of 9 percent of children with working fathers lived in poverty. That average jumps to 26 percent when children with working fathers living in or near poverty (that is, in families with incomes up to 185 percent of the poverty level) are included.
- Having both parents present helped reduce poverty levels: the poverty rate among children in single-parent families was 46 percent, while among those in two-parent families, it was about 10 percent. The poverty rate among children in two-parent families where the father worked full-time and the mother was not employed was 12 percent in 1997.
- The poverty rate among children with working fathers was highest in New Mexico, with 18 percent, and lowest in Maryland, below 3 percent. The poverty rate among children in two-parent families with a father working full-time was lowest in Rhode Island, with less than 1 percent, and highest in New Mexico, with 12 percent.

Fathers, Children, and Child Support

Given the numbers of children being raised by their mothers alone, having nonresidential fathers pay child support is often crucial to the economic well-being of the children.

- Although states were more active in child support enforcement (CSE) from 1995 to 1996 than they had been earlier, there was only a small increase in the collection of child support nationwide during that time. In 1995, the national collection rate among child support cases was 19 percent; in 1996, the rate was 21 percent.

- A recent report analyzing 1995 data estimated that only 63 percent of the $28.3 billion owed to custodial parents was actually paid. (This excludes informal payments without court agreements and/or CSE involvement.)
- State child support collection levels by case varied in 1996 from 10 percent in the District of Columbia to 42 percent in Vermont.

The Changing Face of Fatherhood

While the aggregate statistical data tell an important story about fathers, they do not tell the entire story. To date, the main focus of the responsible fatherhood movement has been poor noncustodial fathers and so-called deadbeat dads—nonresident fathers who have the ability to pay child support but do not do so. Recognition that different groups of fathers have different needs, and hence will benefit from different kinds of interventions, is important for those who wish to design and develop programs and policies for fathers. Understanding the needs of the various subgroups may increase states' success in providing appropriate services for these fathers and subsequently help their children. The 1997 edition of *Map and Track Fathers* elaborated on some of the different subgroups of fathers, including teens, single-parents, and incarcerated fathers. While there is overlap among subgroups of fathers, other subgroups can be identified, including working fathers trying to be more involved with their families, noncustodial fathers, African American and other minority fathers, and gay fathers.

An Overview of State Findings

As in 1997, all of the states responding to the NCCP questionnaire had at least one activity to encourage responsible fatherhood. In fact, based on the number of states that responded, there was proportionally little change from 1997 to 1999 in the number and types of responses. See Figure 1.

Figure 1

Changes in the Number and Percentage of Types of Initiatives Reported by the States, 1997–1999

Type of Initiative	1997 (N=52)*		1999 (N=45)*	
	Number of states reporting activity	Percentage of states responding with initiatives	Number of states reporting activity	Percentage of states responding with initiatives
Promote public awareness	39	75%	38	84%
Prevent unwanted or too-early fatherhood	40	77%	37	82%
Promote fathers as economic providers	46	89%	43	96%
Promote fathers as nurturers	40	77%	36	80%
Build leadership capacity	20	39%	22	49%

* Includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Promoting Public Awareness

According to tipping point theory, broadened public awareness can be an important tool to build support for the emerging public perception of fathers as economically and emotionally responsible.

In 1999, 38 of the 45 responding states reported current activities using public awareness to promote responsible fatherhood. Two of the 38 states had only planned or piloted initiatives. Twenty-one states are implementing two or more public awareness initiatives to encourage responsible fatherhood. There was an increase in the proportion of states that have public awareness initiatives compared to 1997. These strategies include:

- Sponsoring conferences, forums, or summits on responsible fatherhood (11 states).
- Using sports teams to bring the message of responsible fatherhood to the public (10 states).
- Using public service announcements on posters, radio, television, or the Internet (22 states).
- Using special publications on fatherhood (9 states).
- Other strategies include the governor's declaring a special day to recognize the importance of parent involvement; the state reaching out to local programs to encourage their involvement in promoting responsible fathering; and the establishment of a public awareness committee with a mandate to develop new public awareness methods (11 states).

Preventing Unwanted or Too-Early Fatherhood

Young fathers and young mothers are especially vulnerable to poor outcomes for them and their children. Programs to prevent unwanted or too-early fatherhood mark a key early intervention strategy.

In 1999, 37 states indicated that they sponsor one or more initiatives to help prevent unwanted or too-early fatherhood. Of these states, 31 report that their initiatives have already been implemented, while six report having initiatives that are only in the pilot or planning stages. The nature of the initiatives varies greatly, from having a school curriculum to enforcing statutory rape laws to working with incarcerated youth. These strategies include:

- A school-linked strategy, usually a curriculum to help young men prevent unwanted fatherhood (12 states).
- Community-based programs funded or entirely run by the state (15 states).
- Federally-funded abstinence programs (8 states).
- Specialized direct-service programs that teach father responsibility through either case management, mentoring, or peer education (8 states).
- Pursuit and prosecution of older men who prey on younger women as statutory rape offenders (8 states).

- Other means, such as working with incarcerated youth, developing a task force on unintended pregnancies, developing plans for interagency collaboration around preventing unwanted or too-early fatherhood, encouraging state service agency staff to speak with and help young fathers, and working with businesses to promote positive youth development (10 states).

Enhancing Fathers as Economic Providers

Given the low national child support collection rates (nationally, CSE agencies collect from about 21 percent of the cases) and the large numbers of low-income fathers, strategies to promote economic family sufficiency among fathers is crucial.

A total of 43 states reported strategies to help fathers be better economic providers for their children, either by assisting low-income fathers with employment and training or by improving child support enforcement. Two of these states indicated their initiatives are either being planned or in the pilot phase. These strategies include:

- An employment and training program for low-income and unemployed fathers, often funded by TANF or Welfare-to-Work funds (29 states).
- Enhanced paternity establishment methods (18 states).
- Improving CSE procedures, including revoking driver and other state-issued licenses and using the Internet to post a top 10 "deadbeat dads" list, or enhancing methods of establishing paternity (22 states).
- Training staff at state and local service agencies, including Head Start, in CSE procedures (6 states).
- Continuing child-support pass-through (19 states).
- A state earned income tax credit (EITC) to low-income families (10 states).
- Other strategies, such as memoranda of agreement between state agencies and privately and publicly funded initiatives (14 states).

Strengthening Fathers as Nurturers

There are two reasons for states to develop strategies to promote fathers as nurturers. The first is that research on children suggests that in general (albeit with some exceptions), children with involved fathers do better. The second reason is that it is in the states' interest to promote economically responsible fathers. Increasing evidence suggests that fathers who are engaged with their children—whether they see them informally or through planned access and visitation—are more likely to pay child support, either in dollars or, for low-income fathers who lack fiscal resources, in in-kind contributions.

In 1999, 36 states indicated they were implementing one or more initiatives to promote fathers as nurturers. This contrasts with 40 of 50 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico reporting such efforts two years ago, although, proportionally, the difference is not significant. Seven of the 36 reporting in 1999 indicated that most of their nurturing fatherhood programs are in the pilot or planning stage. Strategies include:

- Using access and visitation projects supported with federal funds from the welfare law (17 states).
- Sponsoring divorce and conflict mediation or counseling for divorcing or never-married couples (10 states).
- Providing programs for incarcerated fathers (9 states).
- Promoting father-friendly workplace policies (4 states).
- Other methods include establishing a putative father registry for men to volunteer paternity, and providing public assistance to mothers who marry the father of their child and outreach and parenting classes to new fathers (19 states).

Building State and Local Leadership Around a Fatherhood Agenda

A focus on leadership is key to promoting a policy agenda in the context of multiple state and local priorities. There are three clear ways of indicating leadership around a fatherhood agenda: (1) creating a state-level focus for engaging a broad group of stakeholders; (2) developing fiscal strategies to promote local program development and leadership; and (3) keeping track of funding levels.

In 1999, 22 states indicated that they have initiatives to build leadership capacity around responsible fatherhood. Two of them are in the pilot or planning stage. Strategies include:

- A designated individual or coordinating body to oversee fatherhood initiatives statewide (12 states).
- Keeping track of some or all fatherhood expenditures (11 states).
- Sponsoring community mobilization strategies to create coalitions or networks of community-based organizations or leaders (7 states).
- Using mini-grants to encourage innovative programs on fatherhood (8 states).
- Other strategies include using savings from TANF to sponsor fatherhood programs in state agencies; having state- and county-level staff receive training from the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families on how to engage fathers and develop responsible fatherhood programs; setting up local networks to help divorcing parents; and developing regional fatherhood coalitions for planning initiatives (4 states).

Beyond the Findings: Pending Issues for States and the Field

Bubbling up in the fatherhood literature, among practitioners, and indeed among fathers, are a series of emerging issues that will no doubt become more central in the coming years in response to the popular media, new policy directions, and fatherhood advocates. While a handful of states are addressing one or more of these issues, most do not. The issues include:

- Helping fathers in families trying to balance family and work responsibilities;
- Integrating strategies to encourage fathers as economic providers and as nurturers;
- Understanding the gender issues (including marriage) confronting the field;
- Connecting fatherhood to the broader child and family agenda;
- Keeping the momentum of the movement going despite changes in state leadership; and
- Building the knowledge base about fatherhood through research and improved statistics.

All of these issues have the potential to impact state policy decisions about responsible fatherhood and, depending upon how they are addressed, to "tip" the norms about fatherhood to encompass more active positive involvement with children from resident as well as nonresident fathers.

Reflections and Action Steps

Reflections on the Findings

Overall, the pattern of state findings suggests little change in state efforts to promote responsible fatherhood. States that seemed to be building momentum in 1997 continue to do so. But beyond this, much of the impetus for initiatives is driven by the availability of federal dollars through welfare reform and child support enforcement legislation. States continue to focus their initiatives on a limited number of subgroups of fathers. Further, only a handful of states are developing focused strategies to promote a view of fatherhood that encompasses both nurturing and economic responsibility. This is a loss not only for fathers, but even more importantly, for their children. It is also of concern that only a few states are addressing the issues and controversies that are emerging from the field. Below are highlighted themes emerging from the findings and suggested actions that states can take.

- Many states still focus on obtaining child support payments from absent fathers as their main method of ensuring responsible fatherhood. Although this has led to a slight increase in child support collections nationally, it ignores fathers in a family context and the nurturing role of fathers as well as research that shows a link between fathers as nurturers and fathers as economic providers.
- Where increased attention to fatherhood is visible, it appears that the catalysts are either the federal government or foundation initiatives. Thus, all reporting states indicate activities related to low-income fathers, particularly in response to welfare policy changes.
- There is evidence in a few states that the fatherhood agenda is spreading to other policy areas and is being integrated into a broader family agenda. This is evident particularly among those who work with young children (e.g., in Head Start), and in the areas of welfare reform, or domestic

violence prevention.

- States seem to be paying more attention to helping low-income fathers become better economic providers through fostering education and employment initiatives rather than focusing solely on traditional CSE strategies. This is due, in part, to increased federal funding from Welfare-to-Work grants but may also be due to the compelling body of research that suggests that low-income fathers who do not pay child support would pay if they had adequate employment.
- States, for the most part, continue to focus on a small subset of fathers, primarily noncustodial low-income fathers, teenagers, and, in a few states, incarcerated fathers. Very little attention is being directed to two-parent families or to parents in the context of their work. Only four states expressly stated that they were looking at father-friendly work policies. No state reported special initiatives to help custodial single-parent fathers.
- Although a number of states are beginning to deepen leadership strategies, only four states have developed leadership by implementing a combination of initiatives that show their commitment in philosophy and action to encouraging both financial and nurturing responsibility in fathering.

Action Steps for States to Take

This suggests nine key action steps that states might take to promote the well-being of fathers, and consequently their children:

1. Analyze and build on state fatherhood demographics.
    - Carefully analyze the demographics of fatherhood in each state.
    - Assess the fit between the demographics of fatherhood in the state and the actual support strategies to promote responsible fatherhood.
2. Strengthen state leadership and visibility around fatherhood issues.
    - Meet with fathers and their advocates from different subgroups to ascertain their needs and determine whether new state policies and practices might be developed in partnerships with them and other stakeholders from both the public and the private sectors.
    - Work with community and state leaders to create coalitions, commissions, or advisory boards around responsible fatherhood.
    - Designate governor's advisory staff to be responsible for overseeing fatherhood programming in the state.
    - Ensure that the state fatherhood agenda addresses both the economic and nurturing aspects of fatherhood.
    - Ensure that a broad fatherhood agenda is infused into all other aspects of the state's child and family policy agenda.
    - Allocate resources and build state-level and community-based collaborations to expand the fatherhood agenda.

3. Develop and expand strategies that allow fathers to be involved with their children as part of the state's overall policy.
    - Provide parent training and support in job-linked strategies to promote fathers as economic providers, using the emerging models that have been tested in settings ranging from community-based programs to welfare sites to prisons.
    - Review and revise child support enforcement policies to include promoting fathers as nurturers.
4. Build collaborations with child welfare and domestic violence advocates to ensure that there are mechanisms for protecting children in families that are having disputes over parental access, are in domestic violence situations, or whose safety may be otherwise jeopardized by fathers' behavior.
5. Take full advantage of federal opportunities to promote a fatherhood agenda that addresses the economic and parenting security of families. For example:
    - Use federal Welfare-to-Work funds to help noncustodial fathers find employment and become cooperative and contributing parents, or
    - Develop access and visitation programs that include never-married parents as well as children of divorcing or separated parents.
6. Create a mix of economic supports, in addition to improving child support collection and distribution methods, to help lift and keep children out of poverty. Some of these can be developed through state discretion, such as a state earned income tax credit, others by fully using federal benefits.
7. Promote father-friendly work policies by improving the state's own work policies and joining with the business and corporate community to foster family-friendly policies in private sector work settings.
8. Take deliberate steps to link the fatherhood agenda with other aspects of the state's child and family agenda, including early childhood initiatives, welfare reform, domestic violence, and income supplements.
9. Build the capacity to evaluate fatherhood programs, including assessing impacts on the well-being of children as well as their economic security, and monitor state spending on fatherhood.

Conclusions

The shift to responsible fatherhood seen through a societal lens appears to be approaching the tipping point where involved and nurturing fatherhood becomes the socially accepted norm. *Map and Track Fathers* adds information to the debate on how close the U.S. is to that tipping point as a nation and how actively the states are promoting responsible fatherhood. States, through their own actions and federal incentives, have opportunities before them that can help them better respond to the needs of individual fathers and encourage a social norm of fatherhood that is responsive both economically and psychologically. The states that are out front have modeled the ways other states can move. The task now is to spread the agenda so more fathers, children, and families can benefit.

INTRODUCTION

The State Dads Are In

by David Cohen

"It has helped that being an involved father has become socially acceptable on the street. I see many more young men taking care of their children than there used to be. I feel part of a norm."

Ben, a 45-year-old father who was largely absent in the early years of his son's life (now aged 11), but is now physically, emotionally, and financially committed as a father[1]

Understanding the Critical Role of States in Promoting Responsible Fatherhood

What makes an absent, uninvolved father change his behavior and take on his paternal responsibilities—physically, emotionally, and financially? This is a complex question to answer. It is the American way to admire a man's ability to rise above his demons as an extraordinary act of will, a triumph for the individual. But how and why individual fathers change their behavior is rarely that simple. The path from uninvolved to involved father is seldom a straight line from A to B along which a father travels, propelled by his own individual willpower. Peer pressure plays an enormously powerful role, as do religious leaders, community programs, and corporate culture. But so, too, do larger social norms.

This larger social picture is complicated by the fact that the two most prominent trends in fatherhood in the 1990s appear to contradict each other. There is the trend towards father absence on the one hand and father involvement on the other. The father involvement, moreover, is qualitatively different—more emotionally connected and integrated—from the kind of father involvement associated with previous generations of fathers in this century, who were typically involved with their children as dispensers of discipline, career advisors, and economic providers. So, while there are a significant number of fathers doing less than prior generations—not even being economic providers—a significant number of them are doing, and wanting to do, much more—being nurturers as well.

In the past, these two contradictory trends have been reconciled by dismissing greater father involvement as a worthwhile but limited middle-class phenomenon and father absence as a rampant characteristic of low-income neighborhoods.

But a growing body of national research and small-scale studies suggests that bifurcation by socioeconomic group is no longer valid and that there is a rising tide of father involvement across classes, with significant numbers of low- and middle-income fathers becoming, or wanting to become, more involved in the active upbringing of their children.[2]

For example, a 1997 U.S. Census Bureau report notes that poor fathers were almost twice as likely as nonpoor ones to care for their preschoolers while their wives worked, 43 percent versus 24 percent, respectively.[3] Moreover, blue-collar fathers and fathers in service occupations, such as maintenance, police, fire fighting, and security, were more than twice as likely as managerial or professional fathers to look after their children while their wives worked, 42 percent versus 18 percent.[4]

In 1995, a joint small-scale study by the Erikson Institute and the University of Chicago of 100 low-income African American families with children under age three living in the Robert Taylor Homes, in Chicago, Illinois—the largest public high-rise accommodation in the country—yielded even more surprising results.[5] The authors found that 56 percent of the fathers were described by the mothers as intimately involved in the daily care of their toddlers—things like braiding hair, reading, bedtime routine, dressing, and taking children to doctors; an additional 20 percent were involved in regular, though not as intimate, care of their child; and 66 percent of the fathers were described by the mothers as reliable providers of financial and material support. Fully 94 percent of these couples were not married, however, and would show up on the census as single-mother households with nonresident fathers. What's more, according to the authors of the report, their results are not inconsistent with those of other small-scale studies of low-income fathers with young children carried out elsewhere in the United States.

In addition to the results of published research, the emerging opinion of many hands-on practitioners working with fathers and of social scientists in the fatherhood field is that we are witnessing a significant shift towards responsible fathering up and down the income spectrum. They observe a new sensibility in low-income neighborhoods in which men who shun their responsibilities as fathers are disrespected on the street. Up until recently, many young urban American males considered it "cool" to dodge responsibility as a father—the line of the man on the street was, "A player plays but never pays." Today, that attitude is considered "uncool." According to many fatherhood experts, men are developing a new sense of understanding of the consequences of that attitude for children, which is resonating across ethnic groups, at every income level, throughout the country.[6]

The code of the street is changing. Increasingly, fatherhood practitioners say, fathers are showing up at schools, day-care centers, health centers, and parenting classes, in both middle- and low-income neighborhoods. Increasingly, practitioners are hearing spontaneous conversations among low-income men about their role as fathers. For the first time, too, they are seeing men visiting their friends and taking along their babies, spending quality time as groups of fathers and children together, just as mothers have always done. This is new, they say, and it suggests that social relationships between men and children

are changing to include nurturing as well as providing. Men, especially poor men, they say, never used to talk about being fathers in this way.[7]

In the midst of such a sea change, it is prudent to admit that much of the subject remains uncharted territory and that more research is needed. We need more hard data on what percentage of fathers are actually reengaging with their children, how that figure is changing over time, and exactly which critical interventions cause an absent father to return to his family. Nevertheless, social scientists have begun to suggest that what we are witnessing is nothing short of a social revolution—a revolution still in its infancy, one that could easily be set back—but a revolution, nonetheless, that is changing the code of what it means to be a man and which could have profoundly positive results for society.

Against this backdrop, the states have a window of opportunity in which to play a unique and critical role in promoting responsible fatherhood—both in setting the conditions to alter individual behavior (the microprocess) and in impacting the broader social code of fatherhood (the macroprocess). State policies and initiatives affect individual willpower directly through state interpretation and implementation of federal and state laws that create incentives to ease, or obstacles to block, opportunities for fathers to become more involved in a positive way with their children. State policies and initiatives also influence larger social expectations and norms through their effect on peer pressure, corporate culture, and community and religious support networks. Even more importantly, they set a framework for defining the parameters of responsible fatherhood: they can promote a view that encompasses both economic and nurturing dimensions or one that focuses more narrowly on only the economic dimension.

Applying a Public Health Model to Fatherhood Trends

A public health model, which does surprisingly well at plotting the path of social change, may help explain how state policies, programs, and initiatives fit into, and impact, the overall fatherhood picture. Epidemiologists explain that every medical epidemic has its "tipping point:" the point at which a low-level outbreak of a disease, such as influenza, changes from a stable phenomenon into a public health crisis. To contain an epidemic, one need not expunge the disease entirely, one need only keep the spread of the disease below the tipping point. But if it breaches that point, even huge amounts of effort can come to naught as the disease spreads with frightening momentum. Social scientists have long used this model to explain the spread of medical epidemics, but it has also successfully been applied to plot the trajectory of social problems like "white flight" in the 1970s and crime reduction in the 1990s.[8]

Applied to fatherhood, tipping point theory can illustrate, for example:

- why states should embrace those changes in welfare laws that give them new latitude to make fatherhood part of their welfare reform agendas;

- why it is important for states to see fathers as nurturers as well as economic providers;
- why a seemingly superficial state strategy like public service announcements, which use public personalities to promote responsible fatherhood, can have a sustained and powerful impact on male behavior;[9] and
- why small changes in state policy, programs, and funding can make a disproportionately large difference as society approaches the tipping point.

The key lesson of tipping point theory is that the spread of infectious agents does not follow a linear pattern. It is exponential. Malcolm Gladwell, a staff writer for the *New Yorker* who has written about tipping points as they relate to crime reduction, explains its nonlinearity concisely using a rhyme his father used to say to him: "Tomato ketchup in a bottle/None will come and then the lot'll."[10]

This assumption of nonlinearity may seem intuitive to us when we think about epidemics, but what if it described the curve of social change too? And what if it allowed us to think anew about what social programs promoting responsible fatherhood work? In the application of public policy and programs to social problems such as the renewal of blighted neighborhoods and the turning of absent fathers into responsible fathers, we tend to carry the expectation that every extra unit of resources employed should produce a corresponding result. In doing so, we are making a linear assumption. But tipping point theory suggests that the path of social change is not a straight line, but rather a curve that has flat and steep parts to it. When we are far from the tipping point, in the flat part of the curve, large amounts of resources have only incremental effects. Politicians need patience at this stage of the process as policies and programs result in seemingly little change. As we approach the tipping point, the steep part of the curve, well-targeted policies and programs produce results that are disproportionately large in relation to the effort put in. Once the tipping point is reached, the path of social change takes off with an exhilarating momentum of its own, and a new paradigm is developed where something that was marginal becomes mainstream.

Before we apply this analytical tool to thinking about responsible fatherhood, a key difference between medical epidemics and social shifts must be borne in mind. With a medical epidemic, the infectious agents of change are germs. With a social shift, the infectious agent of change is word of mouth, usually augmented by mass media. It is this that leads to the spread of the idea and then to critical changes not just in attitude, but in behavior. Social scientists believe this typically happens through a five-step process:[11]

1. A small group of risk-taking innovators launch the new idea into society or recognize and label an emerging trend.
2. The early adopters of the idea are usually opinion leaders or role models within their communities who have evaluated the idea and decided to adopt it; they are significant beyond their 10–20 percent of society because of their high public profile, their greater connection to social and interpersonal networks, and their exposure to the mass media.

3. The early majority, who make up approximately one-third of society, deliberate for a long time before taking on an innovation. They are the residents of mainstream, Main Street, U.S.A.

4. The late majority, also about one-third of society, accept an innovation out of economic need or sustained peer pressure. They tend, by nature or circumstance, to be more conservative and risk-averse than the early majority.

5. The laggards are traditionalists who resist an innovation even when it is in their own best interests not to do so.

The tipping point usually lies between the early adopters and the early majority. The early majority are therefore regarded as the critical link in the diffusion process. If an innovation is to succeed, they are the people who have to be won over, whose behavior has to change. But once they are won over and the tipping point is reached, the innovation achieves what is known as takeoff and rapidly becomes mainstream.

Applying Theory to Real Life

In applying this theory to the social shift to responsible fatherhood, two distinct stages can be identified.

In the 1980s, the very existence of the responsible father—one who willingly took on his paternal responsibilities, physically, emotionally, and financially—was parodied and ridiculed, first as the fanciful invention of advertisers, second as a man of doubtful masculinity. These fathers, often dubbed "new men," were few in number in proportion to the total population of fathers, but they introduced the new father into society. They were the risk-taking innovators.

In the mid-1990s, however, it became more difficult to doubt the existence of the economically responsible and nurturing father. He showed up in serious demographic research findings, as seen in the following phenomena:

- Fathers raising their children alone—who, according to the March 1998 Current Population Survey (CPS) number 2.1 million, making up one-in-six single-parent families—are the fastest growing family type today.

- The arrival of the househusband, whose day is spent looking after the children and doing the housework while his partner earns the living. These are men who, by choice or circumstance, have role-swapped and who, despite being initially marginalized, have become considerably less so as their numbers have swollen to over 300,000.[12]

- The rise of the working father who, like the working mother, juggles work and family commitments. A burgeoning number of fathers—an aggregate of 20 percent according to U.S. Census Bureau Reports, rising to 42 percent among certain segments of fathers (such as blue-collar fathers and fathers in service occupations)—provide physical child care for their children while their partners work.[13] The culture in the work-

place is shifting too. More men are "coming out of the closet" about being fathers, sectioning off time for important school days and helping out at home when children are ill.[14]

- The rise of the father who spends more time with his children, and in a qualitatively different way, than previous generations—whether he is married, never-married, or divorced, custodial or noncustodial. For example, a study by the Families and Work Institute found that working men in dual-income families are spending 2.3 hours a day with their children, up 28 percent from 1.8 hours in 1977, whereas for working women, the corresponding figure is 3.0 hours a day, down from 3.3 hours.[15] They also found that for the first time, fathers are spending more time with their children than on their hobbies, which perhaps says more about the reordering of male priorities than any other measure.[16]

In addition, a significant number of high-profile American personalities in fields as diverse as entertainment, sports, politics, and the civil service have embraced responsible fatherhood in a highly visible way. Actor/rapper Will Smith, and prominent athletes such as Wayne Gretzky, John Ellway, and Mark McGwire all cut public images as involved dads.[17] Vice President Al Gore promotes responsible fatherhood both as a politician and in person.

But the public embrace of responsible fatherhood has also come from the most unexpected quarters. Rap artists (such as LL Cool J, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Common), the traditional antiheroes of the music industry, whose influence on young African American males is especially important, have taken it upon themselves to tackle fatherhood issues in their personal and public lives as well as in their lyrics.[18] Even that bastion of male machismo, the police force, has borne witness to the recent announcement by the nation's top cop, FBI director Louis Freeh, who publicly declared that he was taking paid paternity leave, an announcement immediately interpreted in the media as a sign that working fathers in the police force, the civil service, and society do not have to hide. All these men are among the early adopters.

Today we appear to be in the critical zone between the early adopters and the early majority. In 1998, approximately 70 percent of working fathers said they would like to spend less time at work and more time with their families, compared to 12 percent two decades earlier, in 1977.[19] Research by the Kaiser Family Foundation reported in the *Washington Post* in 1998 reveals that success in work and success in family life—and resolving the tension between them—are the foremost concerns of married men.[20] Social scientists are uncovering a sea change in the aspirations, if not always the behavior, of working fathers.[21] Cynics might argue that many fathers are only saying what is socially acceptable, but the fact that responsible fatherhood has become politically correct is itself significant, especially the new sensibility beginning to emerge in low-income neighborhoods in which men who shun their responsibilities as fathers are shown disrespect on the street.

The large gap that has opened up between aspirations and behavior, on top of an already significant number of fathers modeling responsible fatherhood behavior, should signal a clear political opportunity for policymakers. This is

the zone where the tipping point lies—once in the zone, opportunity for change is especially magnified. To borrow a baseball term, the bases are loaded. In this part of the curve, small shifts in social policy and judicious allocation of resources can leverage disproportionately dramatic results.

We cannot know exactly when the tipping point will be reached—optimists may see it as imminently achievable within 5–10 years; pessimists may believe it will take longer than that; cynics will doubt that men can ever get there. But we do know that there are many tipping points—there is the tipping point in society as a whole, but each state, each county, each city, each neighborhood all have their own tipping points as well. And more importantly, although we cannot know exactly where the threshold is, we are not bystanders in this process of change: public policy and wise use of resources can help lower the tipping point. This is why a document such as *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood* is so important. It holds a mirror up to the states, identifying those most active in promoting a vision of economically responsible and nurturing fatherhood while at the same time documenting the concrete strategies states can and are using to reach the tipping point. It is a testament to where the states are for dads and a call to action to policymakers across the country on behalf of fathers.

It was not that long ago that society stood on the cusp of another tipping point in social affairs. A special issue of *Time* magazine on March 20, 1972, headlined "The New Woman, 1972," ran a lead article that noted: "The New Feminism ... is a state of mind that has raised serious questions about the way people live—about their families, home, child rearing, jobs, governments, and the nature of the sexes themselves. Or so it seems now. Some of those who have weathered the torrential fads of the last decade wonder if the New Woman's movement may not be merely another sociological entertainment that will subside presently, like student riots...." In addition, they wrote: "The women's issue *could* involve an epic change in the way we see ourselves, not only sexually but historically, sociologically, psychologically, and in the deeper, almost inaccessible closets of daily habit. Its appearance has startled men and women into self-perception. It has outraged some, freed others, left some sarcastically indifferent. Men and women have shared equally in all three reactions (emphasis added)."[22]

Three decades ago, "the new feminism" was in the wedge between marginal (early adopters) and mainstream (early majority), and it, too, had its doubters and devotees. This is the zone where "the new fatherhood" is today. The shift to responsible fatherhood is approaching the tipping point. It could easily be set back. It certainly will not get there without a push. But in the zone of the tipping point, huge social shifts are possible. For policymakers, it is the zone of maximum leverage.

This second edition of *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood* will document how states are approaching the tipping point through policy and programs and paints a portrait of fathers' involvement in their children's lives.

Endnotes

1. Based on personal interviews conducted by David Cohen with low-income fathers in 1997 and 1998.

2. See, for example, Ash, D. O. (1997) *Face to face with fathers: A report on low-income fathers and their experience with child support enforcement.* Chicago, IL: Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy.

3. Casper, L. M. (1997). *My daddy takes care of me: Fathers as care providers* (Current Population Reports, Household Economic Studies P70-59). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Hans, S.; Ray, A.; Bernstein, V.; & Halpern, R. (1995). *Care giving in the inner city.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago and The Erikson Institute.

6. Based on interviews with Ed Pitt, Geoffrey Canada, and Professor Aisha Ray, as reported in Cohen, D. (1998). One dad's redemption: Does Ben Middleton's private revolution herald a public shift. *The New York Times,* Dec. 20, Section 14, pp. 1, 12.

7. Ibid.

8. Gladwell, M. (1996). The tipping point: Why is the city suddenly so such safer–could it be that crime really is an epidemic? *The New Yorker,* Jun. 3, 72(14), pp. 32–37.

9. For examples of public awareness strategies from the states see Chapter 4 of this report and Knitzer, J. & Bernard, S. (1997). *Map and track: State initiatives to encourage responsible fatherhood.* New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University School of Public Health.

10. See Gladwell in endnote 8.

11. Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations, 4th ed.* New York, NY: Free Press.

12. Levine, J. A. with Pitt, E. W. (1996). *New expectations: Community strategies for responsible fatherhood.* New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

13. See Casper in endnote 3.

14. See, for example Pleck, J. (1997). Paternal involvement: Levels, sources, and consequences. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development, 3rd ed.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

15. Bond, J. T.; Galinsky, E.; & Swanberg, J. E. (1998). *The 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce.* New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

These figures were self-reported and so ran the risk of being biased towards socially-acceptable answers. However, the report authors say that they established a built-in check: they asked the mothers and found that the father's estimates tracked what the mothers said they did.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Wahl, G. & Wertheim, J. with Munson, L. & Yaeger, D. (1998). Paternity ward: Fathering out-of-wedlock kids has become commonplace among athletes, many of whom seem oblivious to the legal, financial, and emotional consequences. *Sports Illustrated,* May 4, p. 62.

18. See Chambers, V. (1998). Family rappers. *Newsweek,* Jan. 19, pp. 66–68

19. See Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg in endnote 15.

20. Morin, R. & Rosenfeld, M. (1998). With more equity, more sweat: Poll shows sexes agree on pros and cons of new roles. *Washington Post,* Mar. 22, p. A01.

21. See Casper in endnote 3, Hans, Ray, Bernstein & Halpern in endnote 5, and Morin & Rosenfeld in endnote 19.

22. The American women, *Time* special issue. (1972). *Time,* Mar. 20.

CHAPTER 1

About *Map and Track Fathers*

"When I first met David he was fourteen and his girlfriend was pregnant. He was in the ninth grade, and he was failing at school because he was stressed out about becoming a father. He and his girlfriend sat down and discussed things. He said that he didn't feel ready to be a father and he wanted to finish school. They didn't want to get an abortion, so they got her aunt to adopt the baby. So what I had to do was get David back on track with school. He's a really good kid. I have his report card where he had all Fs and I have a [newer] report card where he has all As and Bs. He's passed every class and that's because the stress has been lifted off of him.… David has done exceptionally well. He listens to advice and makes good decisions—he's a very intelligent young man. Next year David's going to be in eleventh grade. I want to see him walk across the stage and get his diploma—I'm so proud of him, it's like watching my own child...."

A staff member working in a teen pregnancy prevention and fatherhood support program

"He won't pay child support because now I don't let him see his son—the last time he came to see his son, he was drunk while driving a car. [He] hasn't seen his son in two years: he hasn't sent him a birthday card or Christmas card—nothing."

Susan, a 30-year-old mother with three children aged six, four, and two; she is married to the father of her two youngest children, but the father of her six-year-old is not in their life

What Is *Map and Track Fathers*?

In 1997, the National Center for Children in Poverty, with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, produced *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood*. In the first edition of *Map and Track Fathers*, it was found that every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had at least one program, policy, or initiative to promote responsible fatherhood. This edition of *Map and Track Fathers* continues to identify and profile the strategies and initiatives states are using to encourage responsible fatherhood and, to the extent possible, it tries to give a picture of how states have changed over the last two years.

The 1999 edition of *Map and Track Fathers* addresses four questions that are central to developing an understanding of state strategies to promote responsible fatherhood:

- As we head into the new millennium, to what extent are state policies and practices responsive to the complex demographic picture of fatherhood that is emerging?
- What specific strategies are states developing to promote responsible fatherhood, and how do these strategies vary from state to state and from those used two years ago?
- To what extent are states providing leadership in developing policies and practices that promote responsible fatherhood, from an economic, social, and psychological perspective?
- What are the lessons for future state efforts from the current status of state activities to promote responsible fatherhood?

To answer these questions, *Map and Track Fathers* provides two sets of information:

- National and state-by-state indicators that give a profile of fathers and fatherhood collectively and in each state, and
- Aggregate and state-by-state information on the policies and practices regarding responsible fatherhood using the *Map and Track Fathers* framework.

The *Map and Track Fathers* Framework

The demographic data that are provided nationally and for each state present a snapshot picture of how fathers (and in some cases, mothers) and their children are faring with regard to family structure, employment, educational attainment, poverty status, and state activity in collecting child support. *Map and Track Fathers* focuses on five different sets of strategies, each addressing a unique aspect of the fatherhood challenge. Research on state and local programs and policy, as well as studies on the importance of responsible fathering in child development,[1] provide a rationale for each strategy as briefly outlined below. (For consistency of tracking, the strategy clusters are the same as those used in the first edition of *Map and Track Fathers*.)

Promoting Public Awareness About Responsible Fatherhood

In order to create social change, the public, as well as those most directly affected, must see the need for change and embrace it. Since the previous edition of *Map and Track Fathers,* there is growing evidence, explainable by tipping point theory, that public awareness strategies can have larger effects than initially anticipated.[2] Further, public awareness campaigns are a barometer of the extent to which a state's overall fatherhood approach is traditional (that is, focused primarily on the economic aspects of fatherhood) or comprehensive (encompassing nurturing dimensions as well). The introduction to this

edition discussed what the popular culture is doing to create awareness and acceptance of responsible fatherhood (e.g., rap musicians and sports figures embracing responsible fatherhood). A review of public awareness strategies reveals what states are doing to get information on responsible fatherhood to the public and how, if at all, their approaches have changed since 1997.

Preventing Unwanted or Too-Early Fatherhood

To date, most pregnancy prevention programs focus on adolescent females. However (although teenage girls are increasingly likely to have sex at a younger age[3]), adolescent boys continue to have their first sexual intercourse earlier than adolescent girls. By paying attention to young males in their pregnancy prevention programs, states may be able to help teenage boys make appropriate and responsible sexual decisions. Therefore, *Map and Track Fathers* monitors state initiatives that address preventing unwanted or too-early fatherhood, whether they are state-supported or funded through federal abstinence-education grants.

Enhancing Fathers as Economic Providers

Fathers play an important role in their children's lives, both financially and emotionally. For custodial and noncustodial fathers alike, their financial function plays a big part in how they interact with their children and their children's mother.[4] There are two aspects to promoting fathers as economic providers. The first, and most traditional (and in many ways the least successful),[5] is through child support enforcement (CSE) efforts. Thus, how states administer their CSE programs is very significant, especially given the overall relatively poor levels of performance across the states.[6] In particular, while child support is also important for nonpoor mothers, it is crucial to the effectiveness of welfare reform. Child support has the potential to help many mothers who have left the welfare system stay off the welfare rolls. Although child support payments, by themselves, will not lift poor families out of poverty, when coupled with low-paying jobs and other income supports (e.g., the earned income tax credit), they can substantially decrease the level of poverty experienced by single mothers.[7] Studies have shown that even partial payment of child support or in-kind supports provided by poor or unemployed fathers can help children in poor families.[8] Thus, it becomes increasingly important for states to link CSE to other efforts that can lift and keep families out of poverty. Most recently, and largely under the impetus of federal welfare reform, states have a new awareness that many fathers, particularly low-income fathers, cannot pay child support because they are unemployed or have low-wage jobs. Thus, helping fathers to acquire stable employment with sufficient pay to care for their children is the second aspect to promoting fathers as economic providers. *Map and Track Fathers* also monitors state activities in this area of increasing state focus.

Strengthening Fathers as Nurturers

The role of fathers as nurturers is not only receiving more study by researchers, but also is gaining more recognition among the general public. Previously, fathers who provided care for their children were seen as overly sensitive "Mr. Moms" taking the place of a working mother or as a "father knows best" who, after a hard day's work, stepped in to solve the family crisis of the day. But now, research is showing that fathers are partnering with mothers to care for their children, sharing the burden of work and caregiving. Although much of the research on fathers as nurturers tends to focus on white, middle-class, highly educated men in two-parent families, an increasing number of studies are showing that low-income, noncustodial, and nonresident fathers are also caring fathers.[9] As more research is done in this area, it is expected that the nurturing father, who was once thought of as the exception, will be considered the norm. Therefore, this report also focuses attention on state efforts to promote nurturing parenting by fathers.

Promoting Leadership Capacity

Responding to the new focus of larger social attention on fatherhood issues marks an emerging challenge for states. *Map and Track Fathers* assesses state leadership efforts on behalf of fatherhood in two ways. The first is by exploring those few states that are developing a focal point for coordinated leadership at the state level. The second is by highlighting those states funding or otherwise encouraging local-level leadership, either by supporting local program initiatives and/or by seeding efforts for community mobilization around fatherhood.

Taken together, this combined policy and demographic framework provides a picture of the specifics of state activities regarding fatherhood and an overall view of how states are defining responsible fatherhood. The analysis highlights those states taking a narrow and traditional definition as well as those early innovators seeking to broaden a policy-related view of fatherhood to include not just the economic aspects of fatherhood but also the nurturing aspects. The innovators, in short, are the states helping to shift the larger social balance, to encourage responsible fatherhood according to the tipping point theory identified in the introduction.

How *Map and Track Fathers* Data Were Collected

The research methodology for this edition of *Map and Track Fathers* builds on previous editions in the series. Two questionnaires on state fatherhood initiatives were sent to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. (See Appendix A.) The first questionnaire was a general one asking states to update information from the 1997 edition and to describe any new programs in detail. The general questionnaire also includes questions on the implementation stage of programs (e.g., full statewide implementation or pilot in one or more communities) and their overall cost to the state. A second questionnaire was sent specifically to administrators of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program to determine the links

between fatherhood and welfare programs and whether states are planning to use Welfare-to-Work funds to provide education and job training to nonresident fathers of children receiving welfare. Demographic data were analyzed by NCCP's Demography Unit, utilizing information from the March Current Population Surveys collected annually by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (see Appendices C and D). Child support data was derived from information presented in the U.S. Office of Child Support Enforcement's 21st annual report to Congress.[10] After initial data collection and review, site visits were made to three states to profile their efforts to address fatherhood issues. These, along with examples of city and county leadership, reflect the multiple pathways that policymakers and program designers can take to promote responsible fatherhood.

How *Map and Track Fathers* Is Organized

Map and Track Fathers is organized to help the reader gather information quickly and efficiently. The Executive Summary highlights the framework of the report as well as the important findings. It also discusses the implications of the report for state policymakers and advocates of responsible fatherhood. To set a larger social context, the introduction, "The State Dads Are In," gives a societal view of fatherhood and describes the process by which public perception can change regarding responsible fatherhood. The introduction was written by David Cohen, an award-winning journalist from the United Kingdom who is spending two years studying fatherhood issues in the United States.

This chapter provides an overview of the framework. Chapter 2, "The Faces of Fatherhood," gives demographic findings and offers a qualitative look at the changing face of fatherhood nationally, highlighting particular subgroups of fathers. Chapter 3, "Dads in the States," summarizes the findings from the states and explores a set of emerging issues not clearly addressed by the states as reflected in the findings. Chapter 4, "State Leadership in Action," focuses on profiles of three states, a city, and a county providing leadership with fatherhood initiatives that reflect attention to a range of fathers and both the economic and nurturing aspects of fatherhood. Chapter 5 gives a state-by-state overview of policy and program initiatives based on responses from 45 of the 50 states,* the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico and provides key statistical indicators for each state. Throughout the report, quotes from fathers (or mothers) are included. Most came from fathers interviewed during the site visits, others came from published sources.

* The term 'states' in this report includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico unless otherwise noted.

Endnotes

1. For information on state policy and programs prior to *Map and Track Fathers*, see Brenner, E. & Horn, W. (1996). *Seven things states can do to promote responsible fatherhood*, and Brenner, E. & Orr, D. (1996). *What states are doing to promote responsible fatherhood*. Washington, DC: Council of Governors' Policy Advisors. Also see the Seven Core Learnings of the National Center on Fathers and Families at the University of Pennsylvania. For information on fathers' role in the development of children see, for example, Lamb, M. E. (Ed.). (1997). *The role of the father in child development, 3rd ed.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

2. In 1998, Virginia's media campaign on fatherhood was evaluated by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia. The media campaign reached 37 percent of Virginia's adult population. The evaluation revealed significant positive changes in public knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards father involvement as a result of the campaign. For further information on the campaign and the evaluation report, contact Ron J. Clark, Director, Virginia Fatherhood Campaign, at (804) 786-7367.

3. Sonenstein, F. L.; Stewart, K.; Lindberg, L. D.; Pernas, M.; & Williams, S. (1997). *Involving males in preventing teen pregnancy: A guide for program planners.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

4. See for example, Ash, D. O. (1997). *Face to face with fathers: A report on low-income fathers and their experience with child support enforcement.* Chicago, IL: Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, c/o Family Resource Coalition.

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6. Scoon-Rogers, L. (1999). *Child support for custodial mothers and fathers: 1995* (Current Population Reports, Consumer Income Series P60-196). Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

7. Roberts, P. (1998). The potential of child support as an income source for low-income fathers. *Clearinghouse Review*, 31(11–12), pp. 565–583.

Also see, U.S. General Accounting Office. (1998). *Welfare reform: Child support an uncertain income supplement for families leaving welfare.* Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office.

8. Pirog-Good, M. (1993). In-kind contributions as child support: The teen alternative program. In R. I. Lerman & T. J. Ooms (Eds.), *Young unwed fathers: Changing roles and emerging policies*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

9. Hans, S.; Ray, A.; Bernstein, V.; & Halpern, R. (1995). *Care giving in the inner city.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago and The Erikson Institute.

10. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement. (1998). *Child support enforcement 21st annual report: For the period ending September 30, 1996*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

CHAPTER 2

The Faces of Fatherhood

"By watching the teachers deal with a class of screaming kids I understood that kids respond well if you talk to them in a calmer voice; if you sit down and talk to them instead of yelling at them; if you say, 'Make a good choice.' My kids could never understand why Daddy was always yelling and spanking. I didn't have self-control—the fathering course has taught me self-control."

Harry, a 28-year-old unmarried custodial father of three sons, aged five, nine, and 10, and of two daughters who live with their mother

"I can now say that when I walk out of these gates in April that I have a priority and that is to get to know my son and to raise him the best I know how. I've learned … that it's not going to be easy. It's hard to understand what my son goes through because he doesn't know me. I learned from the program [in prison] that when a father just jumps back into his son's life, it's like one person meeting a stranger. That's what's happening—he's meeting me as a stranger."

Jerry, an unmarried 30-year-old father of a 12-year-old son, is serving five years for grand theft, dealing in stolen property, and forgery

What does the typical American father look like? Is there a representative father whom policymakers can point to as the archetype? Statistically, one can paint a portrait of the majority of fathers in this country in 1998: They are white and non-Hispanic (74 percent), have more than a high school education (55 percent), make above $30,000 annually (59 percent), and are over age 31 (84 percent). (See Figure 2.1.) Most practitioners who work with fathers would disagree with this picture. Just as America is a mosaic of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, so, too, are American fathers diverse. Using demographic data and an analysis of subgroups of fathers, this chapter provides a national picture of the various faces of fatherhood. It shows how fathers are faring nationally and, to a degree, in the states, with regard to family structure, employment, education, poverty, and child support. It also highlights some of the individual subgroups of fathers that make up the faces of fatherhood in this country and could benefit from differentiated policy and practice strategies.

The national statistics represent 1997 or 1998 data where available from the March Current Population Survey (CPS). State data are based on five-year

Figure 2.1

A National Profile of Fatherhood, 1998

Characteristic		Teenage fathers (%)	Single-parent fathers (%)	All fathers (%)
Race and ethnicity	Non-Hispanic white	52.6	69.3	73.6
	Non-Hispanic black	13.5	13.1	8.6
	Hispanic	31.4	13.6	12.7
	Other	2.5	4.1	5.0
Education	Less than high school	66.9	21.2	13.6
	High school	23.8	42.4	31.6
	Above high school	9.4	36.4	54.8
Earnings	Under $5,000	49.5	8.4	4.5
	$5,000–30,000	50.5	52.5	36.3
	Above $30,000	0	39.2	59.1
% in labor force but did not work at full-time, year-round jobs		57.7	24.6	14.3
Age	Under 21	100.0	2.6	0.6
	21–30	0	25.1	15.7
	31–40	0	36.2	42.3
	Above 40	0	36.1	41.5

Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Based on data from the March 1998 Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census. Information on Puerto Rico is not included in the survey.

averages in order to bolster sample sizes that are too small to yield reliable statistics for a single year, and refer to the years 1993 through 1997 or 1994 through 1998, again as the data were available from the annual March CPS. Wherever there is a change in the years used for data sampling, it is so indicated. All statistics were derived by NCCP unless otherwise noted.

A Demographic Profile of Fathers

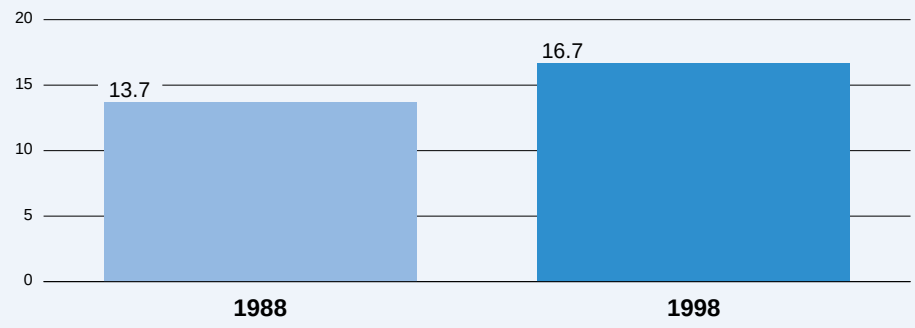
Fathers, Children, and Families

Most of the statistical information on fathers and families presented in the first edition of *Map and Track Fathers* has changed very little over the past two years. For example, the proportion of children living in families where only the mother is present has remained around 24 percent from 1996 to 1998 and included about 17 million children (see Figure 2.2). The proportion of father-only families among all single-parent families rose slightly, from 14 percent in 1996 to 16 percent in 1998. This change did not significantly affect the proportion of father-only families among all family types—about 4 percent between 1996 and 1998. Over the past decade, however, there has been a 76 percent increase in the percentage of children being raised in father-only families. Among mothers in mother-only families, 42 percent had never married and half (50 percent) were divorced or separated. Fathers in father-only families were more likely to be divorced or separated (57 percent) than never-married (34 percent). Within the states, the percentage of children living in mother-headed families was highest in the District of Columbia, with 56 percent. The percentage of children living in father-headed families was highest in Alaska, with 6 percent.

Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show the dramatic increase in the number and percentage of children in father-only families over the 10-year period from 1988 to 1998. Mother-only families also continued to increase, while the number of two-parent families remained virtually constant.

Figure 2.2

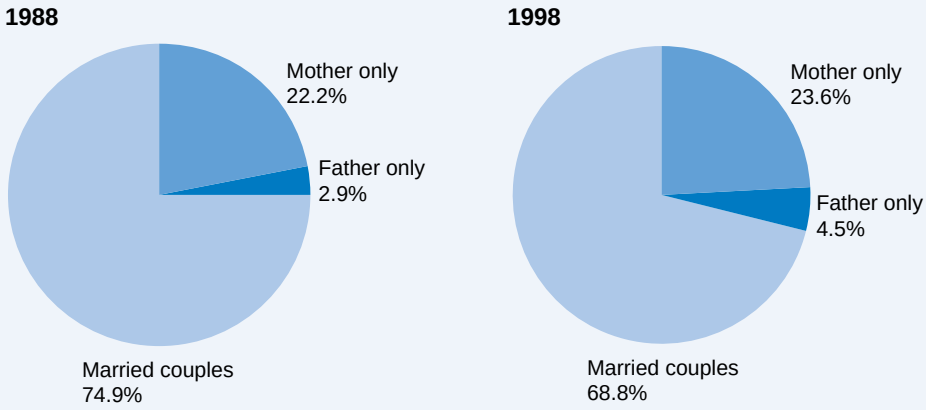
Number of Children Under Age 18 Living in Mother-Only Families, 1988 and 1998



Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys, 1988 and 1998.

Figure 2.3

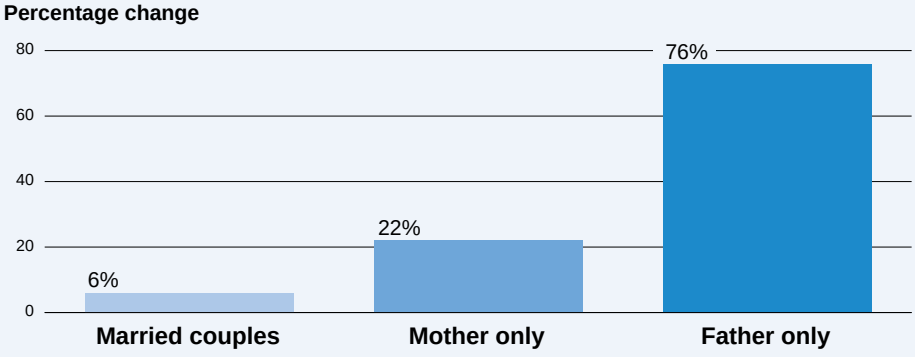
Percentage of Children Under Age 18 in Families of Various Types, 1988 and 1998



Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys, 1988 and 1998.

Figure 2.4

Percentage Change in Number of Children Under Age 18 in Families of Various Types, 1988–1998



Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys, 1988 and 1998.

Fathers, Children, and Work

In 1997, most children under age 18 with working fathers had fathers who worked full-time (86 percent). About 28 percent of all children had mothers who were unemployed, despite data showing that it is increasingly necessary for families to have two wage earners to avoid poverty (see "Fathers, Children, and Poverty" below).

Fathers, Children, and Schooling

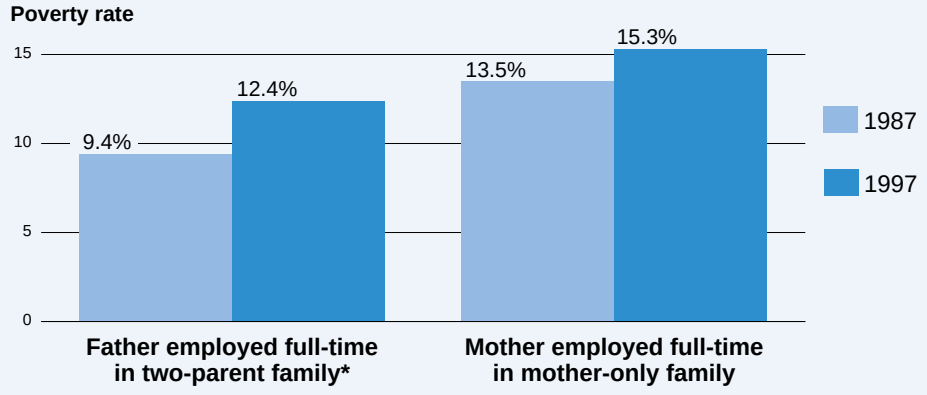
Parental education is important to children, because there is a direct correlation between schooling and employment. Between 1994 and 1998, 31 percent of U.S. children had fathers with only a high school education, and almost 54 percent had fathers who had gone beyond high school. Thirty-four percent of children had mothers with only a high school education, while 49 percent had mothers with more than a high school education. Of the states, during the same period, California had the highest proportion of children whose fathers had less than a high school education (28 percent).

Fathers, Children, and Poverty

National figures show that children who lived with a father employed full-time were not guaranteed immunity from poverty. From 1987 to 1997, the poverty rate among two-parent families where only the father worked and did so full-time increased, from 9 percent to 12 percent (see Figure 2.5). From 1993 to 1997, an average of 9 percent of children with working fathers lived in poverty. When children with working fathers living in or near poverty (in families with incomes up to 185 percent of the poverty level) are counted, the average jumps to 26 percent. Having both parents present helped reduce poverty levels: the poverty rate among children in single-parent families was 46 percent, while among those in two-parent families, it was about 10 percent. The average poverty rate over the five-year period, 1993–1997, among children with working fathers was highest in New Mexico, with 18 percent, and lowest in Maryland, below 3 percent. The poverty rate among children with a father working full-time was lowest in Rhode Island, with less than 1 percent, and highest in New Mexico, with 12 percent.

Figure 2.5

Poverty Rates of Children Under Age 18 in Families with Only One Full-Time Working Parent, 1987 and 1997



* Mother not employed

Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys, 1987 and 1998.

Fathers, Children, and Child Support

There are four steps to child support enforcement: establishing paternity, establishing a child support order, collecting the support owed, and distributing the collected support to the custodial parent and children. Given the numbers of children officially being raised by their mothers alone, the payment of child support by nonresidential fathers is often crucial to the economic well-being of the children.[1] The latest estimate is that 29 percent of all children living in families live with only one parent (primarily, although not exclusively, the mother). (See Figure 2.3.) Although states became more active in child support enforcement from 1995 to 1996, there was only a small increase in the collection of child support nationwide during that time. A recent report analyzing 1995 data estimated that only 63 percent of the $28.3 billion owed to custodial parents was actually paid.[2] (This excludes informal payments without court agreements and/or child support enforcement involvement.) In 1995, child support enforcement agencies collected from 19 percent of the noncustodial parents owing support.[3] In 1996, the child support collection rate was 21 percent. State levels varied from 10 percent in the District of Columbia to 42 percent in Vermont.[4]

The Changing Face of Fatherhood

State-by-state and national demographic data paint one view of fathers. But for those interested in program development and policies, it is also useful to pay attention to the many subgroups of fathers.[5] To date, the main focus of the responsible fatherhood movement has been poor noncustodial fathers[6] and so-called deadbeat dads, nonresident fathers who have the ability to pay child support but do not do so. But as was pointed out in the previous edition of *Map and Track Fathers,* states are beginning to recognize that different groups of fathers have different needs, and hence will benefit from different kinds of interventions. The previous edition of *Map and Track Fathers* elaborated on some of these different subgroups of fathers—including teen fathers, single-parent fathers, and incarcerated fathers. While there is overlap among the groups, other subgroups can be identified, including working fathers trying to be more involved with their families, noncustodial fathers, minority fathers, and gay fathers.[7] Each of these groups face special challenges that are important to understand in designing and developing programs and policies.

The Good Family Man

As was the case in 1997 when *Map and Track Fathers* was first published, most children under age 18 in 1998 lived in homes with a father present (73 percent), and most of these children lived with a full-time working father (86 percent). Because men who are working and married to the mothers of their children are exhibiting responsible behavior that society sees as acceptable, they are often overlooked as a focus of attention in efforts to promote responsible fatherhood. However, because of their responsible fathering behavior, these men, whom David Blankenhorn calls “the good family man,”

may be in just as much need of support as other subgroups of fathers.[8] Blankenhorn says these men often go unrecognized in scholarly and expert discussions on fatherhood. Thus, they are overlooked by policymakers and specialized programs to help men. (See Box 2.1.)

For example, many husbands and fathers have to make the daily choice between commitments to work and family. They would benefit from family-friendly work policies that would allow them to care for their families while earning enough to support them. Low-income fathers could also benefit from family-friendly state policies that allow greater cash disregards and payments to two-parent families, as was incorporated into the 1996 welfare reform legislation.[9] They could also benefit from job training and education that would allow them to advance to higher paying jobs and those with insurance coverage for their families. In addition, state and federal income supplement programs such as the earned income tax credit can provide more money for family needs.

Box 2.1

Stanley's Story

Stanley is black, is 78 years old, has an eighth-grade education, and is the father of 12 children. He quit smoking in 1952, the day his first child was born, because, he says, "I couldn't afford that habit and children at the same time." That same year, he also gave up a promising boxing career to become a cabinetmaker. When he was still young, he and his wife (now married 47 years) both worked, he the day shift and she the night shift, to be able to give their children the best education and the best support they could afford financially and emotionally. In the 1970s, Stanley earned $120 per week and yet managed to save enough to move his family from a three-bedroom apartment in a public housing complex into a five-bedroom house. He has also sent his children to college and has lived to see them start families of their own. Stanley now has 34 grandchildren. Although pension and social security are his only source of income, Stanley is worried about how his children are going to support their families in the current economy.

Stanley believes that what made him endure and gave him the strength to be a good father is his ability to never lose hope. Despite the poverty and all the setbacks, he always thought, "Yesterday is not going to be as good as tomorrow." Stanley has never won an award for father of the year.

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Source: Stanley N. Bernard's account of the experience of his father, Stanley G. Bernard.

Noncustodial Fathers

Noncustodial and nonresident fathers constitute another large group. These men do not reside with their children for a host of reasons, including divorce, separation, incarceration, and lack of marriage. The data reveal clearly that most children benefit from contact with their fathers, whether they live with them or not.[10] (There are, of course, exceptions—for instance, when fathers pose a danger to their children or threaten them with kidnapping.) Yet large numbers of noncustodial fathers do not maintain contact with their children, either emotionally or financially. This has prompted states and the federal government to focus many initiatives on getting these types of fathers to reengage with their children, especially financially.[11] However, to focus entirely on the financial aspect of the noncustodial father's contribution to the family may be shortsighted, ignoring the emotional, nurturing, and safety supports fathers provide for their children. It also ignores a growing body of data that suggest that fathers who are emotionally connected with their children, or at least have contact with them, are more likely to pay child support. So, for example, the Census Bureau reports that in 1995

Box 2.2

Profile of Noncustodial/ Nonresident Fathers

Based on a nationally representative survey, in 1990, there were 8.1 million noncustodial fathers who accounted for between 14.5 and 17.9 million children. Of those paying child support, 6% were poor. Who are the noncustodial fathers? Based on data from various sources, the following composite of noncustodial fathers can be assembled:

- 60% of noncustodial fathers were white; 28% black; 10% Hispanic; and 2% of another background.
- The average age of noncustodial fathers is 36. The average low-income noncustodial father is 33 years old.
- 39% of noncustodial fathers did not complete high school. The average noncustodial father had an 11th-grade education. Only 15% graduated from college, while 28% of resident fathers graduated from college.

How do noncustodial fathers support their children?

- For low-income noncustodial fathers, the average annual family income was $16,592 in 1990, and the average hourly wage was $7.07.
- On average, noncustodial fathers paid about $1,600 in child support annually. Over 60% of noncustodial fathers paid less than 15% of their income on child support.*
- 31% of low-income noncustodial fathers worked full-time year round, while 54% had intermittent work. Of the low-income noncustodial fathers, 9% did not work but were looking; 6% did not work and did not look for work; 4% participated in JTPA programs; and 2% participated in JOBS programs.

How do noncustodial fathers interact with their children?

- 21% of noncustodial fathers had some form of joint legal custody (4% had physical custody as well as joint custody and 17% had joint custody only).
- 46% lived in the same county or city as their children, while 51% lived in a different city, county, or state, and 2.5% lived in some other place such as prison or in an unknown location.
- More than half of noncustodial fathers did not pay child support.
- 37% of noncustodial fathers had established new families.

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* Typically, judicial guidelines require noncustodial parents to pay at least 17% of their income for one child.

Sources: Sorensen, E. (1996), *Low-income noncustodial fathers: Who are they and what are the states doing to assist them in their efforts to pay child support* and Sorensen, E. (October 1996). *A national profile of noncustodial fathers and their ability to pay child support.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Zill, N. & Nord, C. (1996) *Causes and consequences of involvement by noncustodial parents in their children's lives: Evidence from a national longitudinal study.* Washington, DC: Child Trends.

about 74 percent of those who had joint custody or visitation agreements made support payments, compared with 35 percent of those without agreements.[12] Box 2.2 gives a profile of noncustodial/nonresident fathers.

Young Fathers

By age 19, about 85 percent of adolescent males have had sexual intercourse.[13] Although most sexually active males have only one partner, about one in seven sexually active teenage males have three or four sexual partners in a year. This degree of teen male sexual activity is compounded by the fact that less than half of sexually active teen males use condoms (the contraceptive of choice for both male and female teens) every time they have intercourse.[14] This helps to explain the fact that 14 percent of sexually active teen males had gotten their partners pregnant in 1995.

Part of the problem is that teen fathers have few resources to care for children. Half of all teen fathers made less than $5,000 in 1997, and virtually none made $30,000 or more.[15] There is also compelling evidence that teen fathers are less likely to complete high school and less likely to marry the mother of their children than older fathers.[16] However, promoting responsible male sexuality and preventing unwanted or too-early fatherhood should not be limited to teen males only. According to a recent study by The Urban

Institute, the majority of the fathers of the children of teen mothers are in their early to mid-20s.[17]

Box 2.3

Alphonso's Story

Three years ago, Alphonso's father left his family and went to Puerto Rico. Alphonso's mother works for $9 an hour from nine in the evening to six in the morning at an airport in order to support herself and her son. Alphonso's girlfriend is pregnant—he's only 16, she is 15, and the baby is due in seven months. Alphonso wants to go out and work from eight in the evening to three in the morning. Alphonso's social worker at a male involvement program says, "I tried to explain to him that if he works those hours, he'll fall asleep in class and he'll fail. He needs an education and he should get a part-time job and make sure that he finishes school. But Alphonso thinks that if he can make a whole bunch of money he and his girlfriend can get a nice apartment. He's living in a fantasy world because no one will rent a place to a 16-year-old. My job is to break down the fantasy and show him the realities of what's going on out there. I'm trying to get him to take some responsibility. It's hard enough being a black male or a young Latino male or any person of color—and then to not be educated in the society we live in is a huge disadvantage."

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Source: Based on an interview with a social worker by Neria Cohen.

Incarcerated Fathers

More than 770,000 children under age 18 had incarcerated fathers in 1991.[18] About half of all male inmates with children lived with them prior to being incarcerated.[19] The issue for incarcerated fathers is not what happens to their children while they are in prison or jail (most are cared for by the children's mother or another family member[20]), it is what will happen when the fathers are released. According to one study, inmates continue to see themselves as parents even while inside prison, but because of their lack of interaction with the children, they are not knowledgeable about how the relationship should go when they are released. The time they spend in prison is an opportunity to promote nurturing and economically responsible parenting. (See Chapter 4 for one state's experience.)

Box 2.4

Fathers in a County Correction Facility

Twenty men in pale blue uniforms file into a room at a correctional facility in North Florida. The men are silent and appear suspicious—arms crossed, mouths pursed. The men are white, African-American, or Hispanic; they have committed theft or fraud or drug offenses; their sentence is one year or five or more—but they all have one thing in common: They are all fathers.

Among them are a father of a 12-year-old who has seen his child only three times in his life; another father serving a two-and-a-half-year sentence who has three children, one of whom he has never met; and a third father, who is frustrated by his inability to help his 12-year-old who was recently raped and spends time in juvenile detention centers.

The lights dim and the men are engrossed in a five-minute clip from *Boyz in the Hood.* This is the beginning of a 12-hour, four-week program that aims to transform the men's attitudes toward and experience of fatherhood. It is the beginning of a process that often results in even the most withdrawn inmates openly sharing their experiences.

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Source: Based on a site visit to a correctional facility by Neria Cohen.

African American Fathers

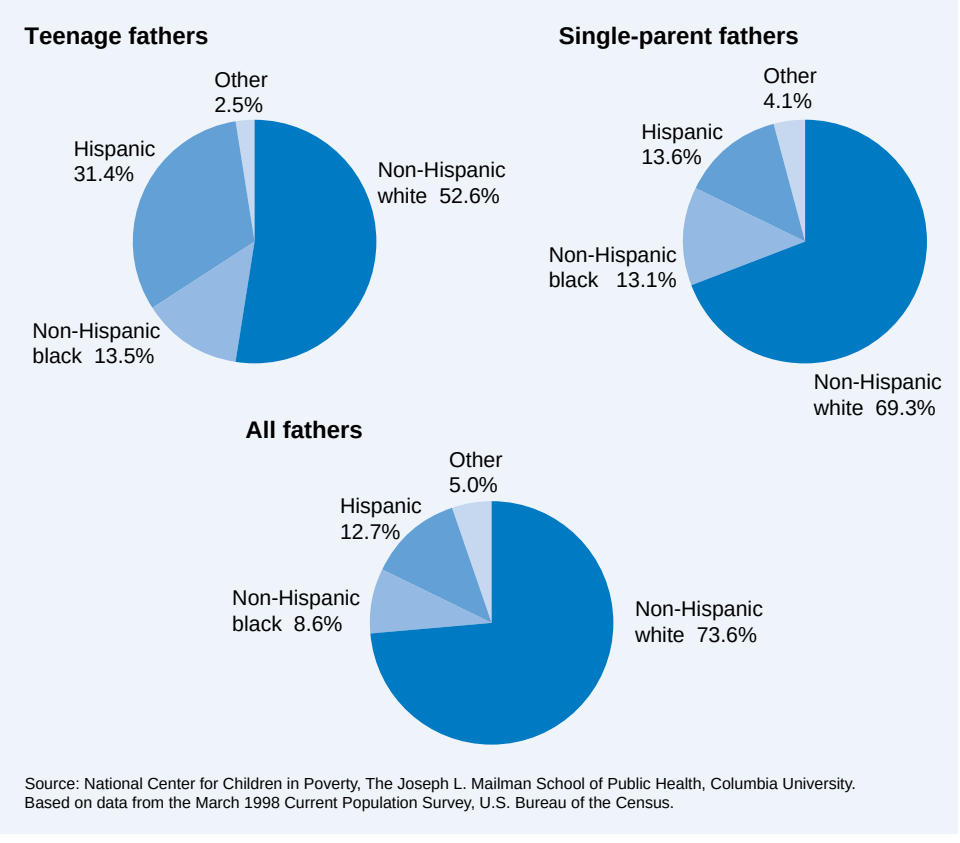
(African American fathers are presented here as an example of minority fathers, although other minority fathers, such as Hispanic fathers, experience some of the same stresses and motivations. See Figure 2.6.) Studies have shown that black men and other nonwhites are less likely to marry than their white counterparts.[21] In 1997, while 59 percent of non-Hispanic white males over age 15 were married and lived with their spouses, 46 percent of similar Hispanic men and 36 percent of similar black men were married and lived with their spouses. In addition, while 28 percent of non-Hispanic white men over 15 years of age were never-married in 1998, 46 percent of black men and 35 percent of Hispanic men over 15 were never-married.[22] The trend of nonmarriage among African American men may be caused by several factors.

One possible reason for nonresident fatherhood among African American men is incarceration. It has been documented that 63 percent of all jail inmates in 1996 were African American. In addition, black inmates (42 percent) were more likely than white (33 percent) or Hispanic (35 percent) inmates to report an immediate family member's being in jail or prison. Most black inmates (53 percent) in state prisons in 1991 grew up in homes without fathers.[23]

A possible reason for the lack of marriage among African American fathers may be lack of jobs. The aggregate unemployment rate for black men 20 years and older was 9 percent in 1998, while for white men 20 and older, the unemployment rate was 4 percent.[24] This differential is much greater in dis-

Figure 2.6

Race and Ethnicity of Fathers, 1998



Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Based on data from the March 1998 Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

tressed communities. Even when they are employed, black men are less likely to have jobs that pay enough to care for their families. One report documents that African American men who are unemployed tend not to be married and not to be as involved with their families as those with full-time employment.[25]

Single-Parent Fathers

The 1997 edition of *Map and Track Fathers* emphasized the rapid increase in the number of children living in single-father homes. Although most children still lived in homes with both parents present (69 percent), families headed by single fathers are still the fastest growing family type (see Figure 2.4). However, none of the states responding to the current NCCP survey stated that they have an initiative to help single fathers. The survey revealed one favorable trend—more states are looking at unmarried fathers as part of a family group by including them in their access, visitation, and mediation programs. Thus, states are treating never-married couples as they would divorced couples and sending the message that despite a father's marital status, he should accept the responsibilities of being a parent and provider for his children. Boxes 2.5 and 2.6, and Figure 2.6, give a profile of single-parent fathers.

Box 2.5

A Comparison of Single-Parent Fathers and Single-Parent Mothers

What Do We Know About Single-Parent Fathers (SPFs)?	**What Do We Know About Single-Parent Mothers (SPMs)?**
• 3.2 million children under age 18 in the U.S. lived with a single-parent father.	• 16.7 million children under age 18 in the U.S. lived with a single-parent mother.
• Families headed by SPFs accounted for 15.9% of all single-parent families and 4.5% of all family types.	• Families headed by SPMs accounted for 84.1% of all single-parent families and 23.6% of all family types.
• 56.8% of SPFs were divorced or separated; 34.2% never-married; 4.2% widowed; 5.3% had a spouse absent for other reasons.	• 49.6% of SPMs were divorced or separated; 42.1 % never-married; 4.4% widowed; 3.9% had a spouse absent for other reasons.
• Most SPFs were white non-Hispanic (69.3%); 13.1% black; 13.6% Hispanic.	• A large proportion of SPMs were white non-Hispanic (50.4%); 31.8% black; 15.3% Hispanic.
• 78.8% of SPFs had at least a high school education.	• 78.4% of SPMs had at least a high school education.
• 75.4% of SPFs were employed full-time.	• 57.2% of SPMs were employed full-time.
• 17.1% of SPFs had incomes below the poverty line.	• 40.0% of SPMs had incomes below the poverty line.
• The median income of SPFs was $30,000.	• The median income of SPMs was $18,109.

Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, The Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Based on data from the March 1998 Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Box 2.6

A Racial/Ethnic Comparison of Single-Parent Fathers

Characteristic	Non-Hispanic white	Non-Hispanic black	Hispanic
Divorced/separated	66.7%	35.6%	34.2%
Never-married	23.1%	54.3%	57.3%
Employed full-time	77.4%	71.0%	75.1%
Below poverty	16.1%	25.2%	33.5%
High school diploma or greater	82.5%	78.0%	54.2%
Median income	$31,252	$25,911	$21,775

Source: Lugaila, T. A. (1998). *Marital status and living arrangements: March 1998 (update*) (Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics Series P20-514). Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Table A.

Gay Fathers

One group often overlooked is gay fathers. There are three types of gay fathers: (1) the father who is in an intact marriage with children and is essentially "in the closet" about his gay lifestyle (this group makes up the majority of the estimated three million gay fathers in the United States);[26] (2) the divorced father who pursues his gay lifestyle and may or may not have told his children of his sexual orientation; and (3) the gay man who has no biological children but desires to become a father through foster care, adoption, or arrangement with a surrogate mother.[27] Because many gay fathers choose to keep their sexual lives private, there are no reliable statistics on the number of gay men with children. It is usually through custody or adoption cases that gay fathers reach the attention of the media, and thus the notice of the larger society. One such custody case occurred in 1997 in New Jersey, where two gay men who were cohabiting succeeded in jointly adopting a young boy who was infected with HIV. In most states, only one member of a same-sex couple will be the legal parent or guardian of an adopted or foster child.[28]

Reflections and Action Steps

Not surprisingly, the demographic patterns and the major subgroups of fathers have been relatively stable since the last edition of *Map and Track Fathers.* In contrast, longer term trends reveal significant changes, particularly in terms of single-parent fathers raising their children—estimated to be about 2.1 million fathers. Moreover, the differing needs of subgroups of fathers are emerging more clearly.

This suggests four key action steps that states might take to promote the well-being of the fathers, and consequently their children:

- Carefully analyze the demographics of fatherhood in each state.
- Assess the fit between the demographics of fatherhood in the state and the actual support strategies to promote responsible fatherhood.
- Meet with fathers and their advocates from different subgroups to ascertain their needs and determine whether new state policies and practices might be developed in partnerships with them and other stakeholders from both the public and the private sectors.
- Allocate resources and build state-level and community-based collaborations to expand the fatherhood agenda.

Endnotes

1. Scoon-Rogers, L. (1999). *Child support for custodial mothers and fathers: 1995* (Current Population Reports, Consumer Income Series P60-196). Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

This report found that poor custodial mothers receiving some or all of the support owed were less likely to be in poverty than poor custodial mothers receiving none of the support owed. Twenty-two percent of those receiving some or all support remained in poverty while 32 percent of those receiving none of the support owed remained in poverty.

2. *Ibid.*

3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement. (1997). *Child support enforcement 20th Annual Report: For the period ending September 30, 1995.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement. (1998). *Child support enforcement 21st Annual Report: For the period ending September 30, 1996.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

5. See, for example, Lamb, M. E. (Ed.). (1997). *The role of the father in child development, 3rd ed.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons. This volume has chapters on gay fathers, young fathers, and good family fathers.

6. What Ronald Mincy at the Ford Foundation terms "turnips," those who owe support without the means to pay the support—i.e., "you can't get blood from a turnip."

7. In October 1997, the state of New Jersey lost a class-action suit to two gay men who were prevented from jointly adopting a child. The state now allows gay couples to adopt jointly. This landmark decision may affect similar litigation in other states where joint adoption by same sex couples is not allowed. See Family Pride Coalition on the Internet at www.familypride.org. See also: Patterson, C. J. & Chan, R. W. (1997). Gay fathers. In Lamb. M. E. (Ed.) *The role of the father in child development, 3rd ed.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

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11. Knitzer, J. & Bernard, S. (1997) *Map and track: State initiatives to encourage responsible fatherhood.* New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University School of Public Health.

12. See *New York Times* in endnote 10.

13. Sonenstein, F. L.; Stewart, K.; Lindberg, L. D.; Pernas, M.; & Williams, S. (1997). *Involving males in preventing teen pregnancy: A guide for program planners.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Nock, S. L. (1998) The consequences of premarital fatherhood. *American Sociological Review,* 63(2), pp. 250–263.

16. Manning, W. G. (1993). Marriage and cohabitation following premarital conception. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 55(Nov.), pp. 839–850.

17. Lindberg, L. D.; Sonenstein, F. L.; Ku, L.; & Martinez, G. (1997). Age difference between minors who give birth and their adult partners. *Family Planning Perspectives,* 29(2), pp. 62–66.

18. Beck, A.; Gilliard, D.; Greenfeld, L.; Harlow, C.; Hester, T.; Jankowski, L.; Snell, T. Stephan, J.; & Morton, D. (1993). *Survey of state prison inmates, 1991.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Adalist-Estrin, A. (1994). Family support and criminal justice. In S. L. Kagan & B. Weissbourd (Eds.), *Putting families first: America's family support movement and the challenge of change.* San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

21. See Nock in endnote 15.

22. Lugaila, T. A. (1998). *Marital Status and living arrangements: March 1998 (update)* (Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics Series P20-514). Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

23. See Beck et. al. in endnote 18. It has long been alleged that police and other law enforcement agents target African-American males as having a "criminal profile" more than other groups. The State of New Jersey is currently investigating the Office of the State Police for racial profiling in traffic stops on the interstate throughways. The Special Crimes Unit in New York City was recently overhauled due in part to its stop and frisk policy that targeted mainly black and Hispanic men.

24. See Lugaila in endnote 22.

25. Koball, H. (1998) Have African-American men become less committed to marriage? Explaining the Twentieth Century racial cross-over in men's marriage timing. *Demography,* 35(2), pp. 251–258. See also Bulcroft, R.A. & Bulcroft, K.A. (1993). Race differences in attitudinal factors in the decision to marry. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 55(May), pp. 338–356.

26. Shernoff, M. (1996) Gay men choosing to be fathers. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services,* 4(2), pp. 41–54.

27. *Ibid.* See also Ortiz, E. T. & Scott, P. R. (1994) Gay husbands and fathers: Reasons for marriage among homosexual men. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services,* 1(1), pp. 59–71.

28. See Shernoff in endnote 26. See also: NJ Court grants joint adoption to gay couple. (1997). *News from the American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network,* Oct. 22.

CHAPTER 3

Dads in the States

"Our goal is to make the relationship of the father, child, and family better than it has been. Over the past 30 to 40 years, these relationships have deteriorated to almost nothing. Without question, a responsible father financially supports his children—but he also emotionally and spiritually supports them. It is not one or the other—it is a combination of all three that is going to make the effort successful."

Buddy Witmer
Executive Director, Florida Commission on Responsible Fatherhood

This chapter provides an overview of the range of strategies states are using to address the issue of responsible fatherhood based on the states' survey responses. It also explores some critical issues states may face in the future and concludes with a series of observations and recommendations.

An Overview of the Findings

Overall, little has changed in the number of states that are sponsoring initiatives in the given categories of the *Map and Track Fathers* framework. The findings are based on responses from 45 states; seven states did not respond to NCCP's surveys and subsequent follow-up calls (see Box 3.1). Figure 3.1 shows the differences between the 1997 and 1999 editions in the number of states reporting activity in each category. The specific strategies reported by each state are described in Chapter 5. (See Appendix B, Table 2, for a list of states using each strategy.)

Box 3.1

State Response to the NCCP Fatherhood Survey

45 states* responded to the 1999 NCCP fatherhood survey:

Alabama	Georgia	Michigan	North Carolina	South Dakota
Arizona	Illinois	Minnesota	North Dakota	Tennessee
Arkansas	Indiana	Mississippi	Ohio	Texas
California	Iowa	Missouri	Oklahoma	Utah
Colorado	Kentucky	Montana	Oregon	Vermont
Connecticut	Louisiana	Nebraska	Pennsylvania	Virginia
Delaware	Maine	Nevada	Puerto Rico	Washington
District of Columbia	Maryland	New Jersey	Rhode Island	Wisconsin
Florida	Massachusetts	New York	South Carolina	Wyoming

Seven states did not respond to the 1999 NCCP fatherhood survey:

Alaska	Idaho	New Hampshire	West Virginia
Hawaii	Kansas	New Mexico	

* The term 'states' in this report includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico unless otherwise noted.

Figure 3.1

Changes in the Number and Percentage of Types of Initiatives Reported by the States, 1997–1999

Type of Initiative*	1997 (N=52)**		1999 (N=45)**	
	Number of states reporting activity	Percentage of states responding with initiatives	Number of states reporting activity	Percentage of states responding with initiatives
Promote public awareness	39	75%	38	84%
Prevent unwanted or too-early fatherhood	40	77%	37	82%
Promote fathers as economic providers	46	89%	43	96%
Promote fathers as nurturers	40	77%	36	80%
Build leadership capacity	20	39%	22	49%

* Includes planned or piloted initiatives.

** Includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Promoting Public Awareness

As noted in the introduction and in Chapter 1, according to tipping point theory, broadening public awareness can be an important tool to build support for the emerging public perception of fathers as economically and emotionally responsible. The survey data reveal a decrease in the number of states reporting strategies to promote public awareness since the last *Map and Track Fathers* two years ago. However, the proportion of states reporting such strategies changed very little between the two years.

In 1999, 38 of the 45 responding states reported using public awareness activities to promote responsible fatherhood. Two of the 38 states had only planned or piloted initiatives. Twenty-one states are implementing two or more public awareness initiatives to encourage responsible fatherhood. There was an increase in the proportion of states that have public awareness initiatives compared to 1997 (see Figure 3.1).

- Eleven states sponsor conferences, forums, or summits on responsible fatherhood.
- Ten states use sports teams to bring the message of responsible fatherhood to the public.
- Twenty-two states use public service announcements by means of posters, radio, television, or the Internet to encourage responsible fatherhood.
- Nine states use special publications on fatherhood.
- Eleven states use other means to increase public awareness of the importance of responsible fatherhood. Strategies include the governor's declaring a special day to recognize the importance of parent involvement (Texas); the state reaching out to local programs to encourage their involvement in promoting responsible fathering (Connecticut and the District of Columbia); and the establishment of a public awareness committee with a mandate to develop new public awareness methods (Missouri).

Box 3.2

States in Action: Mississippi—Getting the Word Out on Responsible Fatherhood

The state of Mississippi has several initiatives that increase public awareness of responsible fatherhood.

Mississippi has implemented a Responsible Fatherhood program that provides work sessions throughout the state to train, educate, and encourage fathers to assume responsibility for their children. Governor Fordice endorsed the initiative by proclaiming June 1998 Responsible Fatherhood Month.

The Heat of the Moment, a documentary promoting abstinence to teens, was produced by the Mississippi Department of Human Services. The video, along with a series of posters, has been distributed in public and private schools and libraries throughout the state.

In November 1998, Mississippi had its first annual Mississippi Responsible Fatherhood Summit, which was open to the public.

The state is also implementing several public awareness campaigns, including a multimedia campaign, a white ribbon campaign, and a "Remember Me Doll" campaign, all aimed at getting communities to establish and sustain teen pregnancy prevention programs.

Preventing Unwanted or Too-Early Fatherhood

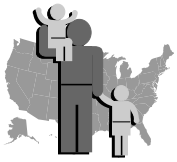
Young fathers and young mothers are especially vulnerable to poor outcomes for them and their children. Programs to prevent unwanted or too-early fatherhood mark a key early intervention strategy.

In 1999, 37 states indicated that they sponsor one or more initiatives to help prevent unwanted or too-early fatherhood. Of these states, 31 report that their initiatives have already been implemented, while six report having initiatives that are only in the pilot or planning stages. The nature and scope of the initiatives vary greatly, from having a school curriculum to enforcing statutory rape laws to working with incarcerated youth.

- Twelve states have a school-linked strategy, usually a curriculum to help young men avoid unwanted fatherhood. Of the 12, two states are planning school-linked/educational programs to prevent too-early fatherhood.
- Fifteen states indicate that they have community-based programs that are funded or entirely run by the state. Four of the 15 states are planning such programs.
- Eight states explicitly state that they are implementing a federally funded abstinence program. One state (Oregon) is piloting an abstinence program (STARS.)
- Eight states have specialized direct-service programs that teach father responsibility through either case management, mentoring, or peer education.
- Eight states indicate that they will vigorously pursue and prosecute older men who prey on younger women as statutory rape offenders.
- Ten states indicate other means of preventing unwanted fatherhood, such as working with incarcerated youth (California, Missouri, Virginia); developing a task force on unintended pregnancies (Wyoming); and developing plans for interagency collaboration around preventing unwanted or too-early fatherhood (Michigan). Mississippi has developed an abstinence unit as part of a state agency, and Oklahoma encourages state service agency staff to speak with and help young fathers. Wisconsin's Brighter Futures Program works with businesses to promote positive youth development.

Box 3.3

States in Action: California, Georgia, and Kentucky—Using Various Methods to Teach Youth Responsible Behavior



California uses multiple methods to prevent unwanted fatherhood and protect teen women. The state offers a "Young Men as Fathers" program at four Youth Authority Institutions to improve parenting skills of young fathers incarcerated in the state juvenile correctional facilities. California also continues to fund the Vertical Prosecution Program, which gives incentives to district attorney's offices statewide to prosecute statutory rape offenders.

Georgia's Male Involvement Program teaches young men, primarily teens, about parenting and child support. Its 24 programs located at teen centers also offer abstinence education, STD/AIDS prevention, contraception information, mentoring, and peer leadership programs. More than 4,000 young men used these services in 1998.

Kentucky has several curricula in schools to teach male sexual responsibility and fathering responsibility. The Pre-Teen Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI) Curriculum, for students in middle school and high school, uses peer educators who conduct a five-session program. The Reducing the Risk (RTR) curriculum, presented by the Department of Health, consists of 16 one-hour sessions focusing on preventing unprotected intercourse. An evaluation of the program in 1992 revealed a 24 percent drop in unprotected intercourse among the participants. Last year, 21,000 students received training through the curriculum in 115 schools.

Enhancing Fathers as Economic Providers

Given the low national child support collection rates and the large numbers of low-income fathers, strategies to promote economic family sufficiency among fathers is crucial.

A total of 43 states reported strategies to help fathers be better economic providers for their children, either by assisting low-income fathers with employment and training or by improving child support enforcement (CSE). Of the states that said they had initiatives to enhance fathers as economic providers, two indicated that their initiatives are either being planned or in the pilot phase.

- Twenty-nine of the 43 states reporting job-related activities in this area say that they have (or plan to have) an employment and training program for low-income and unemployed fathers. Thirteen states indicate that their program is primarily for fathers of children receiving TANF and will use Welfare-to-Work (WtW) funds provided by the recent welfare law amendments in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA). Four of the 13 (Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, and Oklahoma) indicate that their WtW programs are still being planned.
- Eighteen states have enhanced their methods of establishing paternity.
- Twenty-two states indicate that they have improved their CSE procedures, including revoking driver and other state-issued licenses and using the Internet to post a top 10 "deadbeat dads" list.
- Six states indicate that they are training staff at state and local service agencies, including Head Start, in CSE procedures.
- Fourteen states are using other strategies to help fathers improve their economic support of their children, such as memoranda of agreement between state agencies (Arkansas); special programs and initiatives (e.g., child support assurance demonstration in California); and privately and publicly funded initiatives (e.g., Partnerships for Fragile Families initiatives).

- Through the child-support pass-through, 19 states (Alaska and Kansas have pass-throughs but did not respond to the 1999 NCCP survey) report returning to families on welfare some of the child support collected on their behalf, but only Wisconsin returns all of the money to the family. Ten states report offering a state earned income tax credit (EITC) for low-income families.[1] (Two states not reporting to NCCP also have EITCs—Kansas and New Mexico.) Studies are now showing that coupled with other supports, the EITC can help lift low-income families out of poverty.[2]

Box 3.4

States in Action: California and New York—Helping Fathers to Become Better Providers Through Child Support Assurance and State Income Supports

The California Department of Social Services is piloting child support assurance (CSA) programs aimed at providing child support as an alternative to welfare in up to three counties. Child support assurance guarantees families with some earnings and a child support order an established child support payment in lieu of welfare benefits from the CalWORKS program. The state will increase its collections enforcement efforts directed at noncustodial parents who do not pay support. The state seeks to demonstrate whether a guaranteed minimum level of financial support for the children of participating families can result in financial stability for these children while encouraging custodial parents to be employed and noncustodial parents to share in the financial support of their children. CSA demonstration projects will run for three years.

New York has an EITC for low-income parents and also continues the $50 child support pass-through to families receiving TANF who also have a child support order established. (The 1996 federal welfare law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, gave states the option of continuing the pass-through at the same level, increasing or decreasing it, or discontinuing it altogether.) At press time for this report, the New York State legislature was considering a proposal by the governor to raise the pass-through to $100. New York has also amended its TANF plan to offer families its Child Assistance Program, a child support assurance initiative with documented success.

Strengthening Fathers as Nurturers

There are two reasons for states to develop strategies to promote fathers as nurturers. The first is that research on children suggests that in general (albeit with some exceptions), children with involved fathers do better.[3] The second reason is that nurturing fathers are more likely to be economically responsible for their children. Increasing evidence suggests that nonresident fathers who are engaged with their children—whether they see them informally or through planned access and visitation—are more likely to pay child support, either in dollars or, for low-income fathers who lack fiscal resources, in in-kind contributions.[4]

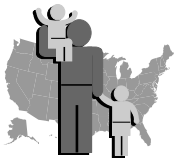
In 1999, 36 states indicated they were implementing one or more initiatives to promote fathers as nurturers. Seven of the 36 states indicated that most of their nurturing fatherhood programs are in the pilot or planning stage. This contrasts with 40 of 52 states reporting such efforts two years ago, although proportionally, the difference is not significant.

- Seventeen states reported strategies to promote fathers as nurturers using access and visitation projects supported with federal funds from the welfare law.
- Ten states indicated that they are sponsoring divorce and conflict mediation or counseling for divorcing or never-married couples.
- Nine states stated that they have programs for incarcerated fathers.[5]

- Only four states indicated that they encourage fathers as nurturers by promoting father-friendly workplace policies.
- Nineteen states report other methods of encouraging fathers as nurturers, including establishing a putative father registry for men to volunteer paternity, or providing public assistance to mothers who marry the father of their child and outreach and parenting classes to new fathers.

Box 3.5

States in Action: Utah and Ohio—Using Welfare Law for Noncustodial Fathers



The new welfare laws allow states to provide services to noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare. It also increases the penalties for noncustodial fathers who do not pay support. Some states are using the provisions in innovative ways:

Utah revokes the driver and professional licenses of custodial parents who do not allow the noncustodial parent to have access to his children. The purpose is to encourage custodial parents to allow for interaction between children and their other parent.

A few states, including Ohio, have developed putative father registries for men who want to establish the paternity of their children. The registries allow fathers to reserve their rights to custody in an adoption proceeding or to dispute contrary paternity claims made by the mother or other putative father.

Building State and Local Leadership Around a Fatherhood Agenda

A focus on leadership is key to promoting a policy agenda in the context of multiple state and local priorities. There are three clear ways of indicating leadership around a fatherhood agenda: (1) creating a state-level focus for engaging a broad group of stakeholders; (2) developing fiscal strategies to promote local program development and leadership; and (3) keeping track of funding levels.

In 1999, 22 states indicated that they have initiatives to build leadership capacity around responsible fatherhood. Two of them are in the pilot or planning stage.

- Twelve states have a designated individual or coordinating body to oversee fatherhood initiatives statewide. Four states have individuals, while eight have advisory councils or coordinating entities, and one state (Virginia) has both an advisory council and a designated individual.
- Eight states indicated that they are using mini-grants to encourage innovative programs on fatherhood. Florida and Indiana indicate they are using some TANF funds to provide the mini-grants.
- Seven states are sponsoring community mobilization strategies that try to pull together coalitions or create a network of community-based organizations or leaders.
- Four states report other strategies to strengthen leadership-building capacity. For example, Georgia uses savings from TANF to sponsor fatherhood programs in state agencies, and Minnesota has state- and county-level staff who receive training from the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families on how to engage fathers and develop responsible fatherhood programs. Maine plans to set up local networks to help divorcing parents.

Box 3.6

States in Action: States Showing Leadership

Four states (Florida, Indiana, Maryland, and Virginia) have developed more concentrated leadership by having a combination of initiatives that show their commitment in philosophy and action to encouraging both financial and nurturing responsibility in fathers.

States show a philosophical commitment to responsible fatherhood by:

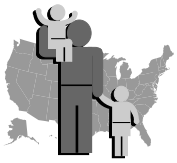
- designating a commission or high-level individual to oversee and/or advise on fatherhood activities in the state; and
- encouraging local leadership, either through community mobilization or mini-grants that act as seed funds for innovative programming around fatherhood.

Leadership is also shown through action such as:

- sponsoring activities that promote public awareness, prevent too-early fatherhood, and encourage fathers to be economically responsible and nurturing toward their children;
- showing a willingness to commit federal and state funds (including savings from reductions in welfare caseloads) to encourage responsible fatherhood; and
- tracking state and federal funds spent on fatherhood initiatives.

Box 3.7

States in Action: Monitoring State Spending on Fatherhood Programs



Eleven states (California, Florida, Indiana, Maryland,* Mississippi, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania*, Rhode Island, and Virginia) report that they keep track of spending specifically on fatherhood initiatives.

- California spends about $8.5 million on the Partnership for Responsible Parenting; $2.85 million of this goes to the Male Responsibility Project.
- Florida spends about $783,000 on activities related to its Commission on Responsible Fatherhood.
- Indiana spends $1 million for the Restoring Fatherhood Grants, $1 million for the Non-custodial Parents Grant (to be distributed this fiscal year), $353,000 for the federal Access and Visitation Grant and anticipates spending $50,000 for a Conference on Fathers and Families.
- Maryland spends $30,000 on development of video and brochures that highlight fatherhood services offered throughout the state.
- Mississippi reports spending the majority of fatherhood dollars on its Abstinence Unit ($500,000) and $59,000 on its Responsible Fatherhood Initiative.
- Missouri will spend $100,000 on Parents Corner, $182,000 on the Proud Parents project, $1.4 million to expand the Parents Fair Share initiative, $173,00 on its Mediation Achieving Results for Children (MARCH) program and $100,000 on its Fatherhood Initiative. Most of the funds are federal dollars, with some state funds.
- Ohio plans to spend $50,000 in each of FY 1999 and FY 2000 for public forums and a statewide conference on fatherhood.
- Michigan's Office of Child Support spends about $200,000 on its fatherhood campaign, 66% of which was federal dollars.
- Rhode Island monitors spending on programs related to the Male Responsibility Project and those preventing unintended and unwanted youth parenthood. During fiscal year 1998, the governor allocated $250,000 for adolescent pregnancy prevention programs. Funding is expected to remain at this level through FY 2001. In addition, the Adolescent Self-Sufficiency Collaborative, which serves pregnant and custodial teen parents, received an additional $175,000 to enhance their capacity to prevent initial and repeat pregnancies to teens.
- Virginia's fatherhood campaign is allotted $500,000.

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* Pennsylvania and Maryland, although indicating that they track funding, did not provide any data on actual spending.

Beyond the Findings: Pending Issues for States and the Field

Bubbling up in the fatherhood literature, among practitioners, and indeed among fathers, are a series of emerging issues that will no doubt become more central in the coming years in response to the popular media, new policy directions, and fatherhood advocates.

While a handful of states are addressing one or more of these issues, most are not. The issues include

- Helping fathers in families trying to balance family and work responsibilities;
- Integrating strategies to encourage fathers as economic providers and as nurturers;
- Understanding the gender issues (including marriage) confronting the field;
- Connecting fatherhood to the broader child and family agenda;
- Sustaining the momentum of the movement despite changes in state leadership; and
- Building the knowledge base about fatherhood through research and improved statistics.

All of these issues have the potential to impact state policy decisions about responsible fatherhood and, depending upon how they are addressed, to "tip" the norms about fatherhood to encompass more active positive involvement with children from resident as well as nonresident fathers. They reflect deepening attention to the faces of fatherhood highlighted in the previous chapter.

Balancing Family and Work Responsibilities

As noted throughout this report, current policies largely ignore the needs of resident fathers, who make up over 70 percent of fathers with children under age 18. Some of these fathers are the "good family man" highlighted in Chapter 2. According to a recent report by Jim Levine and Todd Pittinsky at the Families and Work Institute, when companies have actually surveyed their male employees about work and family conflict, the level of family conflict reported by the males is comparable to that of female employees.[6] As is the case with mothers, fathers want the ability to spend time with their children and to be able to work and earn enough to provide adequately for their family. Yet only four states (California, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) reported initiatives that promote a father/family-friendly workplace as part of their fatherhood agenda. Levine and Pittinsky describe the father-friendly workplace as one where men and women are not only able to balance work and family, but also feel comfortable asking for time off to better care for their family without fear of repercussions. This is an area ripe for state strategies to promote family-friendly workplaces, both through work with the business community and in the state's own workplaces. (In most states, states are major employers.) Yet, to date, this has not been part of the states' fatherhood agendas.

Integrating Strategies to Encourage Fathers as Economic Providers and as Nurturers

This issue is of particular significance for noncustodial fathers. Consistent with the findings in 1997, many states are still focusing on responding to the child support enforcement changes in the 1996 welfare legislation and its amendments in the BBA. What has changed since then is that states are reporting more services to help fathers to be ready to work and to find employment. Much of this is due to WtW funding from the BBA. This move from increasing child support to enhancing the work of noncustodial fathers, in particular, may reflect states' moving from seeing fathers as only "deadbeats" to considering what makes a father unable to pay support; from asking what is the father's intent to what are his circumstances. However, despite this positive trend, only a few states, through their work-related and child-support-related strategies, are responding to the information that fathers who are involved with children are likely to be more willing to contribute economically.[7] As a result, only a few states reported strategies to help fathers be better parents through parent training or parent support efforts.

Understanding Gender and Marriage Issues

Other than programs intended to prevent unwanted fatherhood, no state reported having a program that addressed the needs of women in their fatherhood agenda, although, as can be seen in Chapter 4, programs are increasingly becoming sensitive to gender-related issues. Several sets of challenges exist. In some instances, women are the gatekeepers of access to children, and for a variety of reasons may often make it difficult for them to be with their fathers. Beyond that, the responsible fatherhood movement has devoted little attention to the more controversial side of father involvement—family violence and the imbalance in coparenting responsibilities. These are very real issues for many families, and they need to be addressed openly.

Focusing on domestic violence is particularly important. As fathers are encouraged to become more involved with their children, mechanisms must be in place to ensure that women and children are not exposed to domestic violence. Studies have shown that men are more often than not the perpetrators of this violence.[8] In the past, the emphasis has been on helping the victim to leave the battering situation. Putting the focus on the men may place more responsibility on them to change their behavior or seek help. There are signs that local practitioners are beginning to do this. For example, one program highlighted in the last *Map and Track Fathers,* the Baltimore City Healthy Start program, has incorporated the concept of "respecting your children's mother" into the responsible fatherhood curriculum. The premise is that young men must learn to respect women in general, and especially the mothers of their children, by not abusing them physically, mentally, or verbally.[9] One state (Pennsylvania) has placed its county domestic violence offices in or near the welfare offices, which also administer the CSE unit, to increase communication between the departments.

There are also tensions at the larger political level. One set of tensions comes from women's advocates, who have fought for more equity between men and women at home and in the workplace. They fear that society is leaving mothers' issues behind and moving on to "the next topic." A second set of tensions comes from the very real differences in perspective between the "father's rights" movement and responsible fatherhood advocates. Proponents of father's rights are concerned about access and visitation and payment of child support in divorce situations where there is some contention between the father and the mother. They give legal advice on divorce settlements, establishing and/or denying paternity, and child support. Responsible fatherhood advocates focus on encouraging fathers to provide for their children economically and emotionally, whether in or outside of marriage. As fatherhood is discussed more in the popular culture, states may be pushed to differentiate between the two movements. (See the profile of Massachusetts in Chapter 4 for an example of this phenomenon.)

Another political and psychological issue confronting society and the field is whether responsible fatherhood can exist outside of marriage. Advocates and researchers are still debating the importance of marriage in promoting responsible fatherhood. Those who stress marriage assert that the men as well as the children fare better in a home with married parents. For example, one study reports that young men increased their annual earnings by more than 100 percent when they married.[10] It is also widely accepted that children in married-couple families fare better financially due to the earnings of both parents. Others take the position that coparenting (sharing the parenting obligations such as child care, school visits, and health care) by unmarried parents is a viable alternative to marriage, contending that when cooperative parenting occurs, children will grow up just as healthy and well adjusted as those who live with married parents. Policymakers need to balance these different views until the research base becomes clearer.

Connecting Fatherhood to the Broader Child and Family Agenda

Fatherhood is part of a child and family agenda. There are signs that responsible fatherhood proponents are beginning to see the necessity and logic of networking with those working on child and family issues rather than addressing responsible fatherhood in isolation. In fact, linking responsible fatherhood with other issues is not such a stretch. For example, it has been clearly documented that fathers play an important role in the education of their children, especially young children.[11] Thus, responsible fatherhood activities can easily be coordinated with early childhood education programs, such as Head Start.[12] At least four states (Arizona, Connecticut, Missouri, and Washington) see the need to link fatherhood initiatives (in particular, child support enforcement) to other issues by offering CSE information and training to the staff of other state programs, including Head Start.

Policymakers are also seeing the links between a fatherhood agenda and the successful implementation of welfare reform in new ways. The 1996 welfare law clearly makes responsible parenting a priority. It specifically addresses

responsible fatherhood by relaxing the prohibitions that kept two-parent families from receiving welfare, e.g., by relaxing strict work rules and redefining unemployment.[13] Every state now allows two-parent families to receive TANF.[14] States are also using the BBA to fund much of their employment training programs for fathers. Access and visitation funds are being used to help the children of divorced or, in a few instances, never-married couples to have a more safe and amicable environment. In some states, savings from TANF case closures are used to provide mini-grants to communities (Florida and Indiana) or to fund programs in state agencies (Georgia). For example, Indiana is using $1 million to seed programs at the community level that provide employment and training opportunities to noncustodial fathers. States can also use the federal framework to develop and expand their own fatherhood agendas (see Box 3.8). Other states are supplementing the federal EITC with state earned income tax credits of their own (see Appendix B, Table 1).

Box 3.8

Using Welfare Reform to Promote a Fatherhood Agenda

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 have provided states with opportunities to improve family income and father/family relations by encouraging responsible fatherhood. States can use the following ideas to capitalize on current funding opportunities.

- *Provide employment and training to fathers.* States can use Welfare-to-Work (WtW)* funds authorized by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, and federal TANF block grant funds and state TANF required Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds authorized under PRWORA, to help noncustodial fathers find jobs. While there are some restrictions, states have the option of directing these funds to serve noncustodial fathers as well as to serve custodial mothers (and custodial mothers and fathers in two-parent families). WtW dollars are more restricted than TANF funds, because WtW funds are targeted on long-term welfare recipients who have difficulty finding and holding jobs.
- *Create a mix of supports, in addition to improving child support collection and distribution methods that can help lift and keep children out of poverty.* Child support, along with other federal supports (i.e., increased earnings disregards, extended childcare benefits, and the earned income tax credit) may help families transition from welfare to low paying jobs as they attempt to increase their earnings. States have been given authority to increase, decrease, or discontinue their child support pass-through policy. States can also experiment with child support assurance (an assured benefit to families receiving child support while states increase their efforts to collect from noncustodial parents.)
- *Promote access and visitation for noncustodial fathers.* Another way the PRWORA promotes family stability is through funds set aside for access and visitation programs. All states are eligible to apply for block grant funds that can be used to provide counseling, mediation, supervised visitation and other services to help noncustodial parents have more opportunities to spend time with their children. These programs and services can be provided to divorced, separated and never-married parents and their children. The amount of the block grant is based on the number of children in a state living with both parents, with a minimum size of $100,000. In FY 1998 all states applied for their access and visitation funds. Beginning in FY 1999 states can apply for $50,000 grants from the federal government to develop and enhance existing state-funded programs that promote access and visitation.

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* Pending legislation proposes that states may use 20 percent of the WtW Formula Grant funds for noncustodial parents.

Keeping the Momentum Going

Given the importance of high-level leadership in shaping a state agenda around fatherhood, the issue of political transition is also key. The good news is that promoting responsible fatherhood seems not to be linked to any one party. Thus, fatherhood pundits cannot gauge a governor's commitment by party line. In some respects, the November 1998 election, in which gubernatorial leadership changed in 13 states, will provide useful insight, although it

is too early to draw any conclusions.[15] Our data suggest that states are continuing the momentum from previous administrations. However, it is not a given that this trend will continue.

Building the Knowledge Base

Research on father-related issues is increasing at a rapid rate.[16] With this emerging field come important issues to be addressed. Three are highlighted here. First, as the federal government, states, and foundations have begun to see the relationship between responsible fatherhood and positive family development, and thus begin to allocate more funding to initiatives promoting responsible fatherhood, the search for indicators of success with which to evaluate programs has increased as well. It is becoming more and more essential to judge whether financial and programmatic investments are truly making a difference. But this poses a number of methodological challenges. For example, data on child support do not include demographic characteristics of noncustodial parents. Researchers trying to get a handle on who is paying support and how often have to rely on data sets with relatively small samples that are not collected annually. Further, male fertility and fatherhood information is not consistently collected in national surveys, census data, or clinical studies of children and families.[17] In many cases, data on mothers are used as a substitute for data on fathers (e.g., using the Current Population Survey to get information on father-absent homes, one would have to use homes headed by single mothers as a proxy because the CPS does not categorize the data based on father absence).

To further compound the problem, many times surveys on fathers do not ask the right questions or do not ask the questions in the right way. Instead, the questions may be posed in the same way they would be posed to a mother, who usually has a very different way of interacting with children. In addition, many times questions regarding fathers are posed to mothers, who give their own perspective on their children's father. Optimally, information needs to be gathered from both mothers and fathers before all the dynamics of fathering can be understood.

The field also lacks indicators to define positive fathering, though several attempts are being made to establish them. *Map and Track Fathers,* by developing five areas (public awareness, unwanted-fatherhood prevention, economic support, nurturing support, and building leadership capacity) for programs, policies, and initiatives is one attempt to prompt the field to think of indicators. Other efforts include *The Evaluability Assessment of Responsible Fatherhood Programs* by the Lewin Group, which describes approaches and program content areas for evaluating fatherhood programs. A third effort was an all-day meeting undertaken by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, utilizing about two dozen researchers and practitioners in the field to develop a list of indicators for positive fathering.[18] But until these indicators are agreed upon, information necessary for policy development will be limited. (See Appendix H for a description of important research and the implications for promoting a fatherhood agenda.)

Reflections and Action Steps

Overall, the pattern of findings suggests little change in state efforts to promote responsible fatherhood. States that seemed to be building momentum in 1997 continue to do so. But beyond this, much of the impetus for initiatives is driven by the availability of federal dollars through welfare reform and child support enforcement legislation. States continue to focus their initiatives on a limited number of subgroups of fathers. Further, only a handful of states are developing focused strategies to promote a view of fatherhood that encompasses both nurturing and economic responsibility. This is a loss not only for fathers, but even more importantly, for their children. It is also of concern that only a few states are addressing the issues and controversies that are emerging from the field.

Reflections

Overall, there has not been very much change in state initiatives to promote responsible fatherhood in the two years since the first edition of *Map and Track Fathers* was released. As in the past, all reporting states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, indicated doing something, but often the initiatives were not extensive or supported with state dollars. This is troubling in view of the evidence that the larger society is investing more attention in fathers and that even small investments can have a real payoff. Below are highlighted themes emerging from the findings and suggested action steps that states can take.

- Many states (43 of the 45 states responding to NCCP's survey) still focus on obtaining child support payments from absent fathers as their main method of ensuring responsible fatherhood. Although this has led to a slight increase in child support collections nationally, it ignores fathers in a family context and the nurturing role of fathers as well as the research that shows a link between fathers as nurturers and fathers as economic providers.
- Where increased attention to fatherhood is visible, it appears that the catalysts are either the federal government or foundation initiatives. Thus all states report activities related to low-income fathers, particularly in response to welfare policy changes.
- There is some evidence in a few states that the fatherhood agenda is spreading to other policy areas and is being integrated into a broader family agenda. This is evident particularly among those who work with young children (e.g., Head Start), welfare reform, and domestic violence.
- States seem to be paying more attention to helping fathers become better economic providers through fostering education and employment initiatives rather than focusing solely on traditional CSE strategies. This is due in part to increased federal funding from Welfare-to-Work grants but may also be due to the compelling body of research that suggests that low-income fathers who do not pay child support would pay if they had adequate employment.[19]

- States, for the most part, continue to focus on a small subset of fathers, primarily noncustodial low-income fathers, teenagers, and, in a few states, incarcerated fathers. Very little state-level leadership or attention is being directed to two-parent families or to parents in the context of their work. Only four states expressly stated that they were looking at father-friendly work policies.
- Although more states are trying to build leadership capacity around fatherhood, only 12 states have commissions or a designated individual to provide leadership to communities. In other states, one particular agency (e.g., the Department of Social Services or the Child Support Enforcement Agency) has taken on leadership of fatherhood initiatives. But typically, governors' policy advisors and designated state agency staff change frequently and agencies providing various fatherhood programs do not coordinate (and are often uninformed about each other's efforts). Further, only seven states are supporting community mobilization and leadership development activities, and only 11 of the states answering the NCCP survey are tracking fatherhood-related expenditures.

Action Steps

The findings and the reflections suggest a series of action steps that states might take:

1. Strengthen state leadership and visibility around fatherhood issues.
    - Work with community and state leaders to create a coalition, commission, or advisory board around responsible fatherhood.
    - Designate governor's advisory staff to be responsible for overseeing fatherhood programming in the state.
    - Promote a state fatherhood agenda that addresses the economic and nurturing aspects of fatherhood.
    - Ensure that a broad fatherhood agenda is infused into all other aspects of the state's child and family policy agenda.
2. Develop and expand strategies that allow fathers to be involved with their children as part of the state's overall policy.
    - Provide parent training and support in job-linked strategies to promote fathers as economic providers, using the emerging models that have been tested in settings ranging from community-based programs to welfare sites to prisons.
    - Renew and revise child support enforcement policies to include promoting fathers as nurturers.
3. Build collaborations with child welfare and domestic violence advocates to ensure that there are mechanisms for protecting children in families that have disputes over parental access, are in domestic violence situations, or whose safety may be otherwise jeopardized by fathers' behavior.

4. Take full advantage of federal opportunities to promote a fatherhood agenda that addresses the economic and parenting security of families. For example:
    - Use federal Welfare-to-Work funds to help noncustodial fathers find jobs and become cooperative and contributing parents.
    - Develop access and visitation programs that include never-married families as well as children of divorcing or separated parents.
5. Create a mix of economic supports, in addition to improving child support collection and distribution methods to help lift and keep children out of poverty. Some of these can be developed through state discretion, such as a state earned income tax credit, others by fully using federal benefits.
6. Promote father-friendly work policies by modeling the state's own work policies and joining with the business and corporate community to foster family-friendly policies in private sector settings.
7. Take deliberate steps to link the fatherhood agenda with other aspects of the state's child and family agenda, including early childhood initiatives, welfare reform, domestic violence, and income supplements.
8. Build the capacity to evaluate fatherhood programs, including assessing impacts on the well-being of children as well as their economic security, and monitor state spending on fatherhood.

Conclusions

The shift to responsible fatherhood seen through a societal lens appears to be approaching the tipping point. *Map and Track Fathers* adds information to the debate on how close the U.S. is to that tipping point as a nation. States have opportunities before them (especially in recent federal legislation) that can help them better respond to the needs of individual fathers and promote a social norm of fatherhood that is responsive both economically and psychologically. The states that are out front have modeled the ways other states can move. The task now is to advance the agenda so more fathers, children, and families can benefit.

Endnotes

1. State earned income tax credits can be either refundable or nonrefundable. The refundable credit is given to families even if they show no income on their tax return. If the amount of the credit exceeds tax liability, the excess is payable directly to the taxpayer. In the nonrefundable version, the credit is subtracted from the tax liability. Eight states have refundable credits (Georgia, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Vermont, and Wisconsin). Three states have a nonrefundable credit: Iowa, Oregon, and Rhode Island.

2. See Bennett, N. G.; Li, J.; Song, Y.; & Yang, K. (1999). *Young children in poverty: A statistical update, June 1999 Edition.* New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, for a discussion of the impact of EITC on young child poverty. See also Knitzer, J. & Page, S. (1998). *Map and track: State initiatives for young children and families, 1998 edition.* New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University School of Public Health, for more information on state income supports for young children and families.

3. See Ash, D. O. (1997). *Face to face with fathers: A report on low-income fathers and their experience with child support enforcement.* Chicago, IL: Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, c/o Family Resource Coalition and Furstenberg, F. F., Jr.; Sherwood, K. E.; & Sullivan, M. L. (1992). *Caring and paying: What fathers and mothers say about child support*. New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

4. A recent report by the U.S. Bureau of the Census found that visitation and joint custody are associated with higher child support payments. The study found that 74 percent of noncustodial parents with joint custody and visitation rights paid support while only 35 percent without visitation rights paid. See Scoon-Rogers, L. (1999). *Child support for custodial mothers and fathers: 1995* (Current Population Reports: Consumer Income P60-196). Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

5. Some states, such as Florida, fund local programs for incarcerated fathers. Only those programs initiated by the states are reported here.

6. Levine, J. A. & Pittinsky, T. (1997). *Working fathers: New strategies for balancing work and family.* New York, NY: Addison-Wesley.

7. Interviews with poor noncustodial fathers have revealed that many feel that having more access to their children would encourage them to pay child support more consistently. See Ash, and Furstenberg, Sherwood, & Sullivan in endnote 3.

8. Sternberg, K.J. (1997). Fathers: The missing parents in research on family violence. In M. E. Lamb, (Ed.) *The role of the father in child development, 3rd ed.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

9. Ekulona, A. (1996). *The Healthy Start fathers journal.* Baltimore, MD: Baltimore City Healthy Start, Inc.

10. See Lerman, R. I. & Ooms, T. J. (Eds.). (1993). *Young unwed fathers: Changing roles and emerging policies.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. Also Horn, W. & Bush, A. (1997). *Fathers, marriage, and welfare reform.* Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute.

11. Nord, C.W.; Brimhall, D.; & West , J. (1997). *Fathers' involvement in their children's schools*. National Household Education Survey Statistical Analysis Report, National Center for Educational Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

12. See, for example, National Governors' Association, Social Services Policy Division. (1998). Promoting responsible fatherhood. *StateLine*, Washington, DC: National Governors' Association, Center for Best Practices.

13. Bernard, S. (1998). *Responsible fatherhood and welfare: How states can use the new law to help children* (Children and Welfare Reform Issue Brief No. 4). New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University School of Public Health.

14. Knitzer, J. & Page, S. (1998). *Map and track: State initiatives for young children and families, 1998 edition*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University School of Public Health.

15. An extreme is Minnesota where an independent governor, Jesse Ventura, was elected. The state has been known in the past for its public and private leadership in fatherhood, which have gained national recognition. The new governor, who has no party affiliation, has not stated his stand on fatherhood and so it is uncertain the direction the state will take. Twelve other states also have new gubernatorial leadership. They include: Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, and South Carolina.

16. The National Center On Fathers and Families (NCOFF) has a database on responsible fatherhood literature called FatherLit and is part of NCOFF's Father and Family Link. The data is searchable by date of publication, author, or subject. The Internet address is http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu.

17. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (1998). *Nurturing fatherhood: improving data and research on male fertility, family formation, and fatherhood.* Washington, DC: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics.

18. In a meeting of the Working Group on responsible Fathers held by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in April 1998, the group came up with five categories of behaviors that typifies a responsible father. The behaviors include: contributions (what fathers give materially to their children such as material and financial support); connectedness/caring (an active demonstration of a fathers love for his children); care giving (providing nurturance and performance of routine tasks necessary to maintain the child's physical and emotional well-being); co-parenting (establishing a supportive and cooperative parenting arrangement with the child's mother or guardian); and competency (acting as a role model through presenting a positive example for the child to follow).

19. See, for example, Ash, and Furstenberg, Sherwood, & Sullivan in endnote 3.

CHAPTER 4

State Leadership in Action

"The bottom line is we still want to get child support for the children but if we can help the dad become involved with his child and give him some skills so that he can get employment or stay employed, I think that's what the ultimate goal has now changed to."

Tom Horan
Connecticut Department of Social Services
Public Assistance Consultant

"When we started this work, when you mentioned the word 'fathers' in a political context, most people thought of fathers' rights movements which deal primarily with custody battles and issues of child support. What the [Governor's Advisory] Commission [on Father Absence and Father Support] has done is refocused the discussion about fatherhood onto what is a responsible father—what are his obligations to his family, his children and community—and what sort of actions can be taken at government level to support that."

Marilyn Ray Smith
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Director, Commission on Fathers and Chief
Legal Counsel for the Child Support Office

"The single most positive thing we can do to reduce child poverty is to focus on male responsibility."

Jim Bailey
Florida Department of Health
Healthy Start Coalition Contract Manager

State policies set a framework for defining the parameters of responsible fatherhood. They promote a view that encompasses both economic and nurturing dimensions, or they focus more narrowly on only the economic dimension. The latter, for instance, is reflected in the fact that states tend to concern themselves primarily with how the trend toward father absence impacts state coffers, e.g., through increased welfare dependence of father-absent families. Much less often do states consider the needs of resident fathers feeling work-family stresses or the family challenges that children in poverty face.

This chapter profiles three states, a city, and a community that are stretching the boundaries of how fatherhood is defined and, in the process, reaching out to help fathers with different faces and needs. These profiles were developed for three reasons. First, they give a richer picture of what is going on in states that are providing leadership than is possible just by summarizing specific state data or aggregate data across the states. Second, they provide texture to the goal of this report: to explore how states can promote social policies that encourage movement in the larger society toward a broader view of responsible fatherhood. Third, they illustrate the importance of individual and collective leadership in promoting a fatherhood agenda in the context of a wider agenda for children and families. In each instance, the profiles were developed based on site visits.[1] For other examples of state leadership reported for *Map and Track Fathers,* see Box 3.6 in Chapter 3.

Connecticut Leadership on Fatherhood

"I was still a child myself. If my daughter was playing in the dirt, I'd say, 'Don't sit in the dirt, get out of the dirt' … I didn't let her be a child.…"

Sam, a father who was 16 years old when his daughter was born

Connecticut has a range of diverse programs (fitting into the five categories of programs outlined earlier) throughout the state that are not connected to any one individual body or person for leadership and direction (see Chapter 5). The programs are generally supported by one or more state agencies, often using federal funds, although they are shaped locally. The Department of Social Services (DSS) has taken the most active leadership role. Tom Horan, the public assistance consultant for the DSS, notes, "From the state perspective, the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement within DSS has been the impetus for most of the fatherhood activity so far." The Department of Labor has also recently contributed a large amount of money to employment-related projects for noncustodial fathers. A sample of the fatherhood initiatives supported by DSS in Connecticut are described below.

Department of Social Services, Child Support Enforcement

The basic purpose of the fatherhood projects initiated by the DSS is to reach out to noncustodial fathers in order to alleviate the financial burden on the single mother. Exemplifying the themes highlighted earlier in this report, Connecticut is rethinking its approach to meeting this goal. In the past, the assumption was that if the noncustodial father could not support his family financially, then he really didn't have anything to offer them. Recently, there has been more of a focus on the importance of the father's emotional involvement with his children. As Mr. Horan says: "Studies have shown that dads who are in contact with their children and feel they are invested in their child's life generally tend to pay child support more readily." Therefore, the state is also beginning to look at ways to help noncustodial fathers improve their employment situation so that they are in a better position to pay child

support. In the past, single mothers received employment training. Now these services are being offered to noncustodial fathers as well. To build this agenda, in 1997, DSS received federal support for two fatherhood projects: (1) an access and visitation grant run through the court system; and (2) a state collaboration grant implemented by Head Start facilities.

Access and Visitation Grant

The access and visitation grant provides services to never-married couples who require assistance in establishing visitation agreements. When a couple goes through a divorce, the court system requires that they attend a series of classes. Until recently, this service was not offered to never-married couples.

The project also offers supervised visitation for situations where the custodial parent is concerned about leaving the child with the other parent. The judicial branch has entered into agreements with subcontractors who provide a safe, secure visitation facility. Subcontractors also provide counseling services for families. This project has been successful in identifying a population that was not receiving services of any kind. Many men who are brought into the court for contempt or for the first time on child support issues say they do not want to pay child support because they do not have access to their children. The visitation services project attempts to eliminate this barrier by working out an amicable agreement with the mother of the child for visitation rights. When the noncustodial father is brought into court during the Family Support Magistrate hearings, he is referred to the judicial branch and mediation services are offered to him. The service is voluntary; if the custodial parent does not agree, or if there are domestic violence issues, or if the mother feels the child may be endangered, she may decline. The children in such situations are often at risk, and therefore counseling is provided for them as well as for the parents. The project is being piloted in Hartford Superior Court and is in its second year of implementation.

Head Start, Child Care, Child Support Collaboration Grant

Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Child Support Enforcement have also been awarded to the DSS and the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) to implement the Head Start, Child Care, Child Support Collaboration Demonstration Project. The project is a three-year pilot program that is being implemented in three sites in the state of Connecticut—in Hartford, New Haven, and Litchfield. The program strategies of the Litchfield Head Start, which serves 220 children aged four and younger at five sites, are described below.

Litchfield is primarily a low-income white community, but it also has children of African-American and Hispanic origin. Approximately 60 percent of the children in the program live in single-parent families. The DSS Head Start project has three main segments: (1) engaging fathers in their children's lives; (2) working with fathers to increase their employment opportunities; and (3) helping mothers who presently are not receiving child support to use the system to get the biological fathers of their children to provide financial assistance.

Male Involvement

Pat Doolan, director of Litchfield County Head Start, feels that of the three segments, the male involvement piece is the most important. Mrs. Doolan says, "Noncustodial fathers often feel like they are simply a cash machine. A common complaint regarding the mother of their child is 'All she wants is my money—she doesn't let me see my kid....'" Mrs. Doolan tells the mothers: "You don't have to love the guy, you don't have to be married to him, you don't have to have a relationship with him. But what you do have to do is figure out a way of working with him to ensure that your child has the best of both parents." The ultimate goal of the grant is to get more men involved in the child's Head Start experience—more fathers, uncles, grandfathers, or whoever the significant male may be in the child's life.

Mrs. Doolan recognizes the value of a father's contribution to the child's well-being and development. She says that fathers and mothers parent in different ways: "For example, on a visit to the park, men are much more likely to let children take risks, to let children go further away from them—the men watch and they know when it's far enough and they will go and get the child. A mother tends to be more protective and wants the child to stay close beside her. So, from the input from both parents, the child learns to be a risk taker and also learns that someone is there to nurture them." The new program hopes to encourage men to become more active parents and to enhance the father's parenting skills.

Box 4.1

How Litchfield, CT, Head Start is Working with Dads

Dads-and-Kids Activities

The most successful method of engaging fathers in their children's lives has been the dads-and-kids activities that take place on weekends. The first activity for dads and kids was held in October 1997, when five dads and five kids went hiking and had a picnic. Over the 1997–98 school year, bimonthly activities were held, and in October of 1998, 80 dads and 80 kids went to the pumpkin patch to pick pumpkins and go on a hayride. Very often fathers, especially noncustodial fathers, tend to limit their activities—taking their child to McDonald's, going to a movie, or just watching television. These dads-and-kids activities aim to teach the fathers that there are a lot of different things that three- and four-year-olds like to do, and by taking fathers on the activity, the staff show them how to do it. In addition, four or five times a year the Litchfield Head Start produces a newsletter especially for the fathers that talks about male-related parenting issues. The "Good Guys Gazette" may cover everything from general parenting information to 20 activities to do with your child on a rainy fall day when you can't go outside.

Staff Training

In order to ensure that Head Start provides a male-friendly environment, the staff took part in a two-and-one-half-hour sensitivity training program. All of the teachers are female. The sensitivity program included a discussion regarding what the staff thinks of men as parents. At the beginning of the discussion one teacher admitted: "I wouldn't let a man come into the classroom and do just anything with the kids." When asked if she would let a woman do that, she answered in the affirmative. When asked why there was a difference, her bias became apparent: "Well, men don't know about how to be with children." The program included a group activity about how to use men in the classroom, what rules would be set for them, and if there was a difference between rules for moms and dads and why this might be so. The teachers and family service workers were also asked to look at the image that the center portrays with regard to male parenting. For example, they realized that the bulletin board displayed only images of moms and kids, giving a subtle message that fathers are not included in the parenting process. Partly as a result of this training, since October 1998, the teachers have sent a weekly or monthly newsletter to the noncustodial fathers to inform them of activities that are happening in the classroom. Previously, these newsletters were only sent to the custodial parent. Through these newsletters, the fathers are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, come to parent-child activities, attend parent-teacher conferences, and participate in curriculum development meetings and family night.

Employment

Head Start will use part of the collaboration grant to help fathers become gainfully employed so that they can pay child support on a regular basis. The employment piece is still in its developmental stages. The intention is to set up a coalition-type referral process so that Head Start can refer individuals to programs that already exist. It will cater to a variety of fathers' needs—e.g., getting a GED, improving job skills, and peer counseling. The project will be run with a case management perspective so that once someone is referred out, their progress will be tracked along with their needs.

Working with Mothers

The third part of the child support initiative works with mothers—especially mothers who are leaving welfare—to assure that they are getting the biological father to pay child support. The Head Start family service workers received training from CWEALF about child support issues. They now work with the mothers in trying to get regular payments. This part of the program has been functional for one year. It recognizes that many mothers are afraid to get into the child support system for a number of reasons—some have tried the system before and it didn't work for them; some don't understand what it's about; and others are afraid to contact the father of their child because he may become violent or they don't want him to know where they are. Head Start will only pursue a case if it is safe for the mother to have contact with the father. Once or twice a year, Head Start holds a meeting where a mother who has been successful in using the system addresses those who are reluctant to do so. This, too, helps to promote a new view of fatherhood.

Funding

In 1998, Litchfield Head Start received $15,000 from the DSS to implement a fatherhood program. For 1999, they have received $61,000, and in the year 2000 they expect this amount again. Since 1997, the Head Start program has had a small grant of $2,000 per annum as part of the federal government's Good Guys in Head Start project. This money was used to fund Dads and Kids, A Winning Combination—bimonthly activities for dads and kids and the newsletter for fathers described above. The DSS grant has enabled Litchfield Head Start to expand on this existing framework.

In addition to the federally driven efforts, while there is no formal coordinating body, the DSS organized a Fatherhood Conference in March 1999. The aim of the conference was to bring together grassroots and community-based organizations and other organizations involved in fatherhood activities throughout the state. Mr. Tom Horan explains, "Our hope is to get a directory of resources developed from that day, so that we can refer people back and forth and organizations can form coalitions to support each other." Further, the DSS has involved the Head Start Parent Involvement Specialist, Lisa Sullivan, in working with all Head Start programs to promote more attention to fathers as well as to address the challenges Head Start faces in the light of welfare changes.*

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* Testimony by Lisa Sullivan at the National Head Start Association Hearings for the Report on Head Start in 2010, Minneapolis, MN, April 15, 1999.

Massachusetts Leadership on Fatherhood

"She'd bring toys out into the front room and I'd get real mad and scream and holler at her or spank her—not realizing that she didn't understand. I was expecting too much from her at such a young age. I learned not to reprimand children too quickly, to hear them out and hear what they have to say about their situation. I learned to be a little bit open-minded instead of so strict and to put a little bit more fun into the father and child relationship."

Brian, a 29-year-old father of two young children aged three and two and an eight-year-old daughter whom he has never met; Brian's father used "switches, belts, and backhands" to discipline him when he was a child

Massachusetts also has a diverse set of programs, but unlike Connecticut, there is the Governor's Advisory Commission on Responsible Fatherhood and Family Support to provide advice and direction. The Commission does not fund programs, but instead brings together leaders of state agencies and of community and faith-based organizations to strategize about how to best use resources in existing organizations to support fathers and families.

The Governor's Advisory Commission on Responsible Fatherhood and Family Support

In June of 1996, the then governor of Massachusetts, William F. Weld, convened a one-day summit entitled Fathers and Our Future. The summit highlighted the tragic consequences of father absence, both on individual families and on society as a whole. In response to this summit, an executive order was issued that created the Governor's Advisory Commission on Father Absence and Family Support (presently called the Governor's Advisory Commission on Responsible Fatherhood and Family Support). Governor Paul Celluci began as chair of the Commission while he was lieutenant governor. Today, as governor, he demonstrates his view that fatherhood is a state priority by continuing to chair the Commission.

The main aim of the Commission, according to Governor Celluci is "to find ways to better coordinate the policies and programs of government agencies with those of community and faith-based organizations."[2] To this end, the Commission brings together high-level state agency officials who have many resources at their command; people from the faith-based communities, who have good grass-roots connections; and representatives from private-sector agencies who are involved in a variety of service delivery projects. The Commission emphasizes that focusing positively and actively on fatherhood issues is good for the community as a whole, and it aims to encourage people within government and in the private sector to begin to respond to these issues in a different way.

Support for the vision of the Commission comes from the highest levels in government. Governor Celluci is a strong advocate for the work of the

Commission. In his many public addresses, the governor states that his most important job is not that of governor, but that of proud father to his two daughters. The governor promotes the idea that a responsible father is someone who supports his children, who is kind to the mother of his children, and who is an upstanding member of the community.

Organizational Structure

The Massachusetts Commission does not have separate funding. The executive director is Marilyn Ray Smith, the chief legal counsel of the Department of Revenue's (DOR) Child Support Enforcement Division, which also provides staff support to the Commission. Ms. Smith explains, "The Commission is not an administrative agency and it has no intention of ever becoming one. Its primary function is to bring together people who have a common interest and give them an opportunity to share ideas and resources." The Commission thus hopes to stimulate, motivate, and encourage fatherhood activities throughout the state. Its strategy is not only to sponsor projects, but also to foster ideas that can then be put into place by existing agencies. Therefore, rather than creating another bureaucracy or another set of agencies and budgets, they are encouraging agencies—those who are already dealing with families and who already have a large staff and good resources—to include fatherhood issues in their core program agenda. Ms. Smith adds, "We also do not want to create an atmosphere of competition between resources devoted to mothers and resources devoted to fathers. We think the concept is that these resources are devoted to families and that mothers and fathers are an integral part of families whether they're living together or not."

The Commission consists of 22 members, soon to be expanded to 30. The Commission meets every six to eight weeks. These meetings focus attention on specific fatherhood issues and suggest ways that agencies can collaborate, cross-fertilize, and bring visibility to them. Each meeting has a different discussion theme. For example, at the February 1999 meeting, members of the law enforcement and criminal justice community addressed the Commission, providing reports on fatherhood activities in the Departments of Probation, Corrections, and Youth Services, and the Office of Community Correction. The meeting educated Commission members about fatherhood activities in these departments, and it stimulated new ideas and cooperation between the agencies.

Six task forces, outlined below, form the nucleus of the Commission. Each focuses on a broad policy area outlined in the governor's executive order and on implementing the recommendations from the previous year's Commission report. These areas are: (1) family relationships, (2) community resources, (3) mentoring, (4) financial responsibility, (5) law enforcement, and (6) health resources.

- Family Relationships Task Force: marriage and divorce; impact of domestic violence on children; access and visitation; parent education for separated parents; co-parenting plans.

- Community Resources Task Force: parent education and child development programs; community outreach; the role of state and local governments in promoting responsible fatherhood; responsible fatherhood public awareness campaigns.
- Mentoring Task Force: research into mentoring programs, especially father-to-father mentoring; mentoring as part of marriage strengthening and family-to-family initiatives
- Financial Responsibility Task Force: job training and development efforts for fathers; child support and paternity establishment; father-friendly workplaces.
- Law Enforcement Task Force: expansion of responsible fatherhood initiatives to fathers involved in the criminal justice system; inclusion of responsible fatherhood initiatives in community policing programs.
- Health Resources Task Force: incorporation of responsible fatherhood initiatives into existing health care services; prevention of out-of-wedlock birth and teen pregnancy; research on fathers and families; voluntary acknowledgement of paternity.

The task forces are made up of Commission members, staff from agencies represented on the Commission, and individuals from the private sector who are not formal Commission members but have an interest in fatherhood issues. The task forces meet once or twice a month. In the first year, their assignment was to compile, research, and make recommendations for the Commission's report. During the second year, the task forces will work to implement the recommendations made in that report.

Dads Make a Difference Report

The Commission's most important accomplishment to date has been focusing the attention of Massachusetts citizens on the concept of responsible fatherhood. It has achieved this by developing *Dads Make a Difference: Action for Responsible Fatherhood*, a 170-page report that is an insightful and comprehensive analysis of the issues surrounding fatherhood. The report describes existing fatherhood activities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and makes recommendations for future projects and strategies. It emphasizes the goals of the Commission—increased paternity establishment and child support collections; stronger marriages; fewer out-of-wedlock births and teen pregnancies; and improved parenting skills of young fathers. It also spotlights the child at risk because of a divorce and recommends parent education and the development of coparenting plans in such a situation.

The report also educates the reader about the many areas in which father absence impacts on society and how to deal innovatively with the complexities of the fatherhood issue. The main body of the report makes recommendations under the following headings: Dads and Jobs; Dads and Marriage; Dads and Responsible Childbearing; Dads and Financial Responsibility; Dads, Moms and Cooperative Parenting; and Dads and Moms Apart. The last chapter looks at ways in which government and public policy can

become more father- and family-friendly. The entire report is available on the Internet at www.state.ma.us/cse/programs/dmd/guide.htm.

It is obvious from the report that the Commission has a broad perspective on the role a father plays in his child's life. Although the report strongly advocates for increased child support collections, it equally emphasizes the importance of a father's nurturing role and presence in a child's life. As Governor Celluci states: "We recognize that even though a father's financial support is critically necessary, it is not sufficient for a child's well-being."[3] The Commission also stresses the fact that the consequences of family breakup on children are long-lasting; it makes strong recommendations to strengthen marriage so that there are fewer divorces. The Commission now faces the task of developing implementation plans based on the report's recommendations.

Selected Fatherhood Activities Supported by the Department of Revenue's Child Support Enforcement Division

According to Marilyn Smith, the Department of Revenue's Child Support Enforcement Division is more focused on the responsible fatherhood issue than any other Massachusetts state agency. As a result of the Commission's work, a number of changes have already taken place in the child support program. The program has shown initiative in getting responsible fatherhood grants and making connections with other organizations who are working on fatherhood initiatives in the state. In particular, it provides the services listed below as a founding member of the Boston Partners to Strengthen Fathers and Families. The child support program also works with the Boston Public Schools to provide the Dads Make a Difference curriculum, which uses older teens to teach younger teens about child support and other responsibilities associated with fathering children. (See the Massachusetts profile in Chapter 5 for a full description of the Dads Make a Difference curriculum.)

Massachusetts' child support program is motivated by the philosophy that a community where responsible fatherhood is seen as the norm encourages voluntary compliance with child support rules and regulations. In addition, it fosters the ideal that a man should not have children until he is financially ready to support a child. (See Box 4.2 for a description of how the child support program has entered into partnerships with other Boston agencies to encourage responsible fatherhood.)

Box 4.2

Massachusetts' Leadership to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood Partnerships in Boston

The Massachusetts' child support program, operating through the Department of Revenue's Child Support Enforcement Division, has formed a partnership with Boston area agencies to provide diverse programs for noncustodial fathers.

- A $250,000 federal grant has been used for a partnership between the child support program and The Boston Healthy Start Initiative to offer a variety of services, ranging from employment and work skills to parenting skills and substance abuse counseling for young fathers.
- Boston has been chosen as one of 10 potential participants in a program funded by a grant of $1.5 million to be implemented over three years focused on young fathers. The child support program formed the Boston Partners to Strengthen Fathers and Families in response to a grant announcement by the National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Development (NPLC). The partners are the child support program, the Boston Healthy Start Initiative, the Children's Trust Fund, STRIVE, the Boston TenPoint Coalition (an organization of more than 60 churches) and Family Service of Greater Boston. The target population is noncustodial fathers, ages 16–25. The program offers a variety of services based on a case management referral system. The grant is part of a $10 million nationwide demonstration project in 10 cities.
- A federal Access and Visitation grant funds a program operated by a partnership between the child support program, the TenPoint Coalition, and the Suffolk County Probate and Family Court. This project targets unmarried fathers who are uninvolved or at risk of becoming uninvolved with their children. It offers visitation support services and parent education.

These partnerships aim to develop the capacity of the city of Boston to provide a seamless menu of community-based supports and services for noncustodial fathers that will improve the financial and emotional relationships between them and their children.

Florida Leadership on Fatherhood

"I've learned to stop worrying about those things and just be with her and show her that I love her—that even though I don't live nearby, if she ever needs me, I'm right there. I'm letting her get to know ME."

Luke, 34, an unmarried father of a seven-year-old daughter who lives with her mother two hours away from his home

Florida has the most structured focus for leadership of the three states profiled in this chapter—a Commission on Responsible Fatherhood. The Commission offers mini-grants as incentives to start or expand innovative programs for fathers, thus acting in a direction-setting capacity.

Florida's Commission on Responsible Fatherhood

In 1996, the Florida legislature established Florida's Commission on Responsible Fatherhood (FCORF) to identify and find ways to remove barriers that prevent fathers from being involved in the lives of their children. The aim of the Commission is to encourage fathers to be involved in all aspects of their children's lives—financially, emotionally, and spiritually. The Commission carries out its work by providing grants to programs that encourage responsible fatherhood and also through its advisory role to the state legislature.

According to 1997 state vital statistics reports, the scale of fathers' lack of involvement in Florida is alarming. Of the 3.5 million children in the state, approximately 33 percent did not have a father present in the household, compared to the national average of 24 percent. Of the children who lived in fatherless households, about 40 percent had not seen their father in at least a year, while 50 percent had never set foot in their father's home.[4]

Traditionally, the father's role has been perceived as that of economic provider, and in many states, addressing fatherhood issues is seen as a way for state or federal agencies to reduce their welfare contributions. Like Massachusetts and Connecticut, Florida aims to transcend these limited definitions of fatherhood by supporting programs that emphasize parenting skills and healthy family relationships. Buddy Witmer, executive director of FCORF, explains the Commission's focus: "Our goal is to make the relationship of the father, child, and family better than it has been. Over the past 30–40 years, these relationships have deteriorated to almost nothing. Without question, a responsible father financially supports his children, but he also emotionally and spiritually supports them. It is not one or the other —it is a combination of all three that is going to make the effort successful." Mr. Witmer is careful to point out that the Commission is not a fathers'-rights group, but rather a group advocating responsible fathering in many different spheres of family life.

One of the motivators behind the creation of FCORF was the late Governor Lawton Chiles. In 1998, the governor visited a fatherhood program funded by FCORF at Jefferson County jail. Much to the anxiety of his security men, the governor walked up and down the rows of inmates, shaking each one by the hand and speaking to them individually. He then addressed the group and spoke poignantly about his relationship with his own father. The man who had reached the highest position of office in the state found a connection with those men who had fallen the lowest—their connection was fatherhood. Although the governor died prematurely a few months later, the vision of that moment lives on in a Commission dedicated to uniting fathers with their children and their families.

FCORF is involved in funding new fatherhood projects as well as enhancing existing initiatives. What follows is a description of the Commission's structure, funding, and program focus.

Organizational Structure

The broad base of FCORF is apparent in the diverse organizations represented by its members. The Commission consists of 25 commissioners who come from a cross section of government, business, civic, legal, and social service organizations. Thirteen commissioners represent specific organizations, including, for example, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Miami Children's Hospital, and Florida Association of Deans and Directors of Schools. Seven members of the Commission are appointed by the governor; two members are from the Florida Senate; two are from the Florida House of Representatives. One judge is appointed by the chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court. In addition, the Commission has a full-time staff of three whose job is to carry out the recommendations of the Commission.

Funding

The operating costs of FCORF are provided by the Florida legislature. The Commission itself raises additional funding for service programs. Since 1997,

the state legislature has allocated FCORF an annual administrative budget of $250,000. This money is used to run an office staffed by a salaried executive director, an administrative assistant, and a research/contracts associate; to pay traveling expenses for the commissioners (who are not salaried); and to sponsor an annual governor's fatherhood symposium.

In 1998, the Commission raised an additional $533,000, which funded 17 fatherhood initiatives in over 35 counties across the state. This money originated from two sources: the Florida Department of Health contributed $250,000 and the Florida Department of Labor and the State WAGES Board contributed $283,000.[5] The Department of Health stipulated that their funds be administered through a local Healthy Start Coalition and limited grants to $50,000 per project. The money from the Department of Labor is earmarked for fatherhood initiatives that include employment training and placement for noncustodial fathers.

Program Activities

The Commission-funded projects vary in scope and focus. A number of the 1998 grants were to assess the interest in and need for a fatherhood program. Activities supported include childbirth and parenting education for men, teen pregnancy prevention efforts in local middle and high schools, parenting skills for incarcerated men, and employment training for noncustodial fathers. FCORF encourages the development of innovative projects, such as the one for incarcerated men in which fathers in prison read a book to their child on audiotape. The tape and book (provided by a large bookstore chain) are then mailed to the children so that they may "read along" with their dads.

Box 4.3

Florida Commission on Responsible Fatherhood (FCORF) Funding Criteria

In order to receive funding from the Commission, an organization has to submit a detailed grant proposal. A committee of commissioners reviews the grant proposals and reports back to the full Commission. A decision is then made regarding which projects will be funded by the Commission and contracts are prepared. The proposed project must address two or more of the following outcomes:

- Enhance ability of the fathers to be full partners in parenting their children through parenting education.
- Establish or enhance peer support networks to help fathers connect or reconnect with their children.
- Reduce teen pregnancy, focusing intervention on males prior to parenthood.
- Reduce incidence of family violence.
- Enhance fathers' ability to secure and retain gainful employment.
- Assist teen fathers in parenting skills, education, and self-sufficiency.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the need for responsible fatherhood.

In order to ensure that programs function as proposed, FCORF conducts two on-site visits per year. The Commission also insists on strict outcome measures. For example, if a program says it will provide parenting education to 50 men, it has to show that it has reached 90 percent of the target population. Program staff are also required to conduct a pretest and a posttest to show the change in knowledge of the participants.

Other Activities of FCORF

In addition to funding and monitoring programs, the Commission holds public meetings, recommends legislative change, conducts media campaigns, and sponsors a statewide fatherhood symposium. For example, the commissioners meet seven to 10 times a year at different locations around the state. These meetings have a twofold purpose: to inform the commissioners and to educate the public. At these meetings, fathers and other family members speak publicly so that the commissioners can hear firsthand about the challenges of parenting—especially single parenting. Expert testimony is also presented on pertinent topics such as father's impact on a child's brain development, shaken-baby syndrome, and issues surrounding child custody. The Commission is also active in providing recommendations to the Florida state legislature on legislation to support responsible fatherhood. In the past year, seven recommendations have led to laws being passed. One example was the Move-Away Law, which stipulates that a custodial parent must show that it is in the best interests of the child before he or she moves a great distance from the noncustodial parent. The importance of this law to noncustodial parents is obvious: If children move away, it may terminate or severely restrict the access noncustodial parents will have to their children. Other legislation that was passed included laws regarding marriage preparation activities and education before divorce.[6]

The Commission also tries to increase public awareness on fatherhood issues. To this end, in 1998, the Commission conducted a statewide media campaign that emphasized the importance of the father's parenting role. Public service announcements (PSAs) were broadcasted over 10,000 times. (Sponsorship ensured that a $25,000 investment yielded over $400,000 worth of airtime.) The Commission got permission from the National Fatherhood Initiative to use their PSAs, "The Nature of Fatherhood," narrated by the resonant-voiced James Earl Jones. The PSAs feature lions and penguins and talk about how fathers in the animal world contribute to the rearing of their cubs and chicks. The campaign was conducted in partnership with the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Florida Department of Children and Families. In 1999, the Commission is planning to work with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence to design billboards and radio spots to highlight issues of domestic violence. This campaign will emphasize that a responsible father does not physically or emotionally abuse his children, wife, or significant other.

FCORF uses part of the funding it receives from the Florida legislature to sponsor an annual symposium on fatherhood in partnership with the governor's office and the Department of Juvenile Justice. The symposium, which is held during the week of Father's Day, provides an opportunity for organizations and individuals to gain insight into issues surrounding fatherhood. The conference features presentations from nationally renowned fatherhood experts. Workshop sessions deal with a variety of fatherhood issues, and existing fatherhood programs give feedback reports. In 1998, musical entertainment was provided by teenagers who had been in the juvenile justice system. That symposium highlighted some success stories by selecting three winners

for the Father of the Year award. The symposium is opened by the governor, thus emphasizing the state's commitment to fatherhood from the highest level. To ensure that the symposium is accessible to everyone, there is no registration fee. The increasing interest in and awareness of fatherhood issues in Florida is highlighted by the growing attendance at this annual event. The first symposium in 1997 drew 250; the following year attendance almost doubled, to over 400; and in 1999, 600–800 people are expected.

What follows is an in-depth look at two projects that received funding from FCORF in 1998. The first is a parenting class that was instituted at correctional facilities in Florida. The second is a fatherhood project at a Head Start site that takes a different approach from the Connecticut initiative highlighted above.

The DADS Family Project, Liberty Correctional Institution, Hosford, Florida

The DADS Family Project received FCORF's maximum grant allowance of $50,000. The project focuses on incarcerated men, but is also linked to the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor Counties.

The DADS Family Project is an innovative parenting course for fathers. DADS is an acronym for Dads Actively Developing Stable Families, a course created and implemented by Larry Barlow, who is a marriage and family therapist, and Arthur Cleveland, a clinical social worker and play therapist. Although the course has been run in numerous correctional facilities, it was originally designed for fathers in any situation—custodial and noncustodial, in prison or out. The aim of the course is to teach fathers how to build a relationship with their children. Most parenting courses start off with issues of communication and discipline, but Dr. Barlow and Mr. Cleveland believe that in order to communicate effectively with children, you first have to build a relationship with them. Dr. Barlow and Mr. Cleveland lead by example, and the course becomes an active demonstration of how to build a relationship as they gradually weave a connection of trust and love between themselves and the men. Their style is interactive, using videos, visual aids, and role-playing to engage all the senses. They do not ask the men to do anything they themselves do not do and they share their own experiences of fathering with insight and humor.

The program leaders nurture and empower the participants and hope that, in turn, these men will do the same for their children. The success of the program is evident from the fact that inmates encourage other inmates to attend. The senior prison psychologist, Connie Schenk, is deluged with requests from men wanting to participate. Dr. Schenk comments, "After the program is over and I see the men on the compound, there's a different light in their eyes and they carry themselves differently—they're a different person because of it." During the four weeks that the program was running, not one of the participants was locked up, which is an unusual occurrence and indicates a conscious change in behavior and attitude.

Box 4.4

Stages of the DADS Family Project — A Parenting Course in a Correctional Facility

A description of the various stages of the DADS Family Project course gives an insight into the lives of the inmates and also highlights the desperate need for changing men's perspectives on fatherhood especially in correctional institutions.

The course consists of four three-hour sessions. The first session helps the men understand their own childhood experiences, which may affect their role as fathers. The men are asked to recall memories of their fathers. At one session, an inmate volunteered: "Well, I never really knew my father. When I was two weeks old, he tried to give me away, and when he couldn't give me away, he set me on fire." Many of the inmates remember enduring harsh discipline and beatings. The course teaches the men alternative ways of parenting so that they no longer have to mimic their often abusive upbringing.

The second session deals with creating a safe and secure environment for children in the home. The inmates watch videos on the importance of the first three years in a child's life; they learn about the dangers of shaken-baby syndrome; and they learn how to child-proof a home to protect toddlers. Issues of drug and alcohol addiction and sexual abuse are addressed as these destabilize the home environment.

A vital stage in building a relationship with a child is understanding the different stages of a child's development. The course encourages parents to teach children a sense of responsibility, which helps them to feel competent and useful to their families. So when an inmate says that his child is only two and cannot contribute to the chores, Dr. Cleveland says: "Aha, a two-year-old *can* contribute because one of the developmental stages that a two-year-old goes through is that they like to sort objects. Therefore you can let two-year-olds divide the laundry or set the table by putting spoons on the table." These are things that kids do naturally at that point in their development, which gives them a sense of competency.

The part of the program that makes the greatest impression on the inmates is the play sessions. The men are given play-dough and bubbles. When asked why he thought playing with bubbles would help him with his child, Kevin, who is 30 years old, said: "I think playing with the bubbles was good because I missed a lot of my childhood. It was good to act as a child because when I get out of here … my son is 12 and he'll still want to do childish things." The men are given a list of games that children of different ages are able to play based on their development. The men learn what to play and how to play so that they utilize these activities to give a child important and reassuring messages. For example, Larry Barlow explains that when you're playing catch with a child and you throw the ball to the child in the same way every time, you give them the message that they can always rely on you.

Finally, the course deals with discipline. The program builds up to this point so that the men have the knowledge and sensitivity to perceive that discipline is about teaching rather than punishing. In addition to using video vignettes, which are discussed and analyzed, the men are asked to take part in role-playing. In one such exercise, Dr. Cleveland acts as a petulant adolescent who will not do his chores and an inmate acts as the father. One of the inmates became so engrossed in the reality of the scene that he started to take off his belt to punish "his child." The men learn alternative ways to deal with conflict so that they don't have to resort to physical or emotional abuse. They go away with the slogan: "Rules without relationships leads to rebellion." One of the inmates serving time for child abuse wrote an unsolicited letter to the superintendent, saying: "If I had known the things that are taught in this class, I would not be here now."

Source: Based on a site visit by Neria Cohen.

The Healthy Start Coalition has applied for a grant to do a follow-up on this program. They would provide further teaching and support groups for the men once they have left prison and are reunited with their children. Having seen the success of the program, the Florida Department of Corrections is in the process of signing a contract directly with the DADS Family Project to replicate the program throughout the state prison system. This is a major success for the Commission; it has provided the seed money for a project that will now be funded independent of the Commission.

Early Education Head Start Program, Bay County–Panama City, Florida

Early Education Head Start of Bay County implemented a male involvement program four years ago. They called it D.A.D.S./A Responsible Fatherhood Program. D.A.D.S. is an acronym for Dads Accepting Duties in Society. In August 1998, Head Start received a grant of $50,000 from FCORF to enhance this program.

Prior to receiving this grant, the project concentrated on getting men into the classroom and out on field trips with the children. The grant has enabled Head Start to pay a staff member to concentrate full-time on reaching fathers, to go beyond the Head Start population to all men in the area who are interested, and to add a 13-part parenting course aimed specifically at fathers. (See Box 4.5.)

D.A.D.S. draws on fathers from all six Head Start sites in Bay County, but meetings are held in one central location. To date, the project has involved 120 men in the fatherhood program. The ethnic spread in the area is varied, with African American, Vietnamese, Hispanic, and white men attending sessions.

Box 4.5

Components of the D.A.D.S. Project—A Head Start Parenting Project

Parenting Course

A parenting course is run once a week for an hour over 13 weeks and follows the curriculum set out in The Nurturing Father's Journal, by Mark Perlman.* The course begins by looking at the man's relationship with his own father and then goes on to deal with issues such as anger management, substance abuse, stress, discipline, family rules, communication skills, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Between seven and 12 men attend each meeting. The atmosphere is relaxed, and the men are encouraged to participate, to talk about problems that they have as fathers, and to share experiences and insights.

College Courses

Steffon Hunt, the Responsible Fatherhood Project Coordinator, believes that it is important for the men to take ownership of the fatherhood project. He encourages initiative and nurtures leadership skills. To this end, he has made funds available to enable a number of the fathers to complete a citizen leadership course at Gulf Coast Community College. This 40-hour college course qualifies the men to become facilitators for meetings and workshops being offered by the college or by any civic or business group in the community—and to assist Mr. Hunt in running the 13-week fathering course.

Community Projects

The fathers from D.A.D.S. are encouraged to attend community awareness sessions in which plans are made for community projects. These meetings are held monthly. In the month of February, for example, they were preparing for Children's Week, which is held every March in Florida. During this event, half a day is set aside for legislators to be in their offices so that the ordinary citizen can consult with them. A group of 25 fathers from the D.A.D.S. project traveled to Tallahassee, the state capital, to speak with their representatives on specific topics relating to children. In order to be prepared for this encounter, the men will attend training workshops on advocacy so that they will know how to approach the representatives and how to address issues. The training will also include more general skills, such as how to write to one's congressperson, and will bring the men up to date on current child care laws. The project aims to instill a strong sense of leadership in the men and teach them how to advocate for their children.

Employment

The Head Start site houses a training room with five computers. The computers have programs to help parents train for their GED. Tutorial assistance and home visits are also provided to help with GED preparation. The computers are equipped with a career skills system, which helps direct people in their choice and understanding of different careers. The D.A.D.S. project also has a collaboration agreement with the Panama City Alumni Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, which is a national fraternity of African-American men. Members of the fraternity mentor the men in the D.A.D.S. program, helping them with employment and education strategies. For example, there are some Alpha members who are engineers at the local navy base. If any fathers are interested in engineering, the Alpha members allow them to shadow them at work occasionally; or they give them applications for employment; or they provide them with direction on what schools to go to or what classes to take. D.A.D.S. also has a partnership agreement with a local Marriott Hotel chain. Mr. Hunt explains: "The Marriott wants to hire some of our fathers because they appreciate our fatherhood program and understand what we are trying to do." For fathers who are seeking employment, there are also classes on basic job skills, such as how to do a résumé, how to dress for success, and how to go about completing an interview. If more individualized information is needed, the men are referred to the local WAGES Coalition office, which has an employability skills center. Head Start collaborates in this way with a number of agencies in order to provide their families with many facilities without duplicating services that are already available in the community.

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* Pearlman, M. (1998). *A nurturing father's journal: developing attitudes and skills for male nurturance.* Panama City, FL: Center for Growth and Development, Inc.

Source: Based on a site visit by Neria Cohen.

Box 4.6

David's Story

David is 24 and is in the air force. His father was also a military man. He was very strict and had high expectations of David (expecting him to make all As and Bs), and David's life was scripted with military precision. David now has a three-year-old stepdaughter, Kayla, and his fiancée is expecting their first child. At the Nurturing Father's Program, he learned that "we tend to father the way we were fathered," and he became more sensitive to the fact that he was often too stern with his three-year-old and had unrealistic expectations of her behavior. David learned the importance of rewarding good behavior and methods of dealing with unacceptable behavior. For example, Kayla used to take off her shoes and jacket and throw them around the living room, or she would leave her toys lying around. David's response used to be a stern lecture. David now keeps a weekly chart of acceptable behavior and rewards Kayla with stars when she acts appropriately. He has noticed that Kayla is more willing to help and is more open to interacting with him. He recently scheduled a weekly family day when, from sunrise to sunset on Saturday, he, his fiancée, and his stepdaughter will spend time together.

Source: Based on an interview conducted by Neria Cohen.

Local Leadership on Fatherhood

Map and Track Fathers is basically about state efforts to provide leadership on fatherhood issues. At the same time, it is clear that there are many pathways to leadership, and that local-level efforts, with or without state involvement, can play a critical role. It is, after all, in communities that fathers, children, and families live. To that end, this chapter concludes with two boxes that provide brief descriptions of two outstanding local efforts, one based in a Colorado county, the other in Baltimore, Maryland, a city that is nationally recognized for its fatherhood programs. But it should be noted that in both instances, there has been strong state-level involvement in fatherhood issues. For example, Colorado and Maryland were two of only a handful of states cited in the 1997 *Map and Track Fathers* as having an individual at the state level to coordinate activities around responsible fatherhood.

Box 4.7

Fathering Through a County Lens: The Center on Fathering in El Paso County, Colorado

The County Context

El Paso County, Colorado, is a rapidly expanding county, with a population of about a half million people, a significant proportion of whom are employed by the military. An estimated 22 percent of Colorado's children in single-parent households live with custodial fathers, which is almost 60 percent higher than the national average of 14 percent.

In 1994, the county embarked on an effort to help fathers more effectively, creating the Center on Fathering.* The use of the title is significant; the focus is not only on fathers, but on the process of fathering, being involved with children. From its inception, the project has been led by Ken Sanders, who has a business degree, social service experience working with adolescents and with families involved in child welfare, and personal experience, for a time, as a single custodial dad.

The Center is housed in a warm and welcoming restored Victorian house. (The restoration was largely carried out by volunteers, including some who have since become very active on the board.) A rich resource library is available, including close to 300 books and a computer database of almost 500 articles.

At the core of the program is a threefold commitment: to serve all fathers, to promote healthy father-child involvement, and to help address related issues, such as reactions from mothers. This commitment is reflected in a growing array of programs and services to strengthen, encourage, and support fathers to be actively and positively involved in the care and development of their children. The Center welcomes all fathers—poor or middle class, custodial or noncustodial, biological or stepfathers. Fathers are referred by the courts, hospitals, schools, churches, and increasingly by word of mouth, from one father to another. In 1999, about 42 percent of the fathers had young children, aged five and under, and 39 percent had children between ages six and 12; 20 percent of fathers were low-income.

Structure and Funding

The two paid staff members and a cadre of volunteers also do considerable community education and outreach, both within El Paso County and beyond. Within the county, there is a particular effort to reach out to youth of high school age and younger, since ages seven to 12 have been identified as a time of great risk. In the beginning, there was also a sustained effort to work with county judges, to educate them about the Center's approach and the research data that support it. Most recently, the Center has offered outreach to the correctional system. Ken Sanders has also been involved in state-level efforts to provide support to fathers, working with Jim Garcia, both in his former capacity as fatherhood policy advisor to former Governor Romer and in his current role of promoting responsible fatherhood through the private sector.

The Center is supported by the El Paso County Human Service Agency. The majority of funds come from federal sources (e.g., TANF, Child Support Enforcement, and WtW) supplemented by local contributions, both in-kind and monetary.

Activities

The Center on Fathering promotes healthy father-child involvement in many different ways. There are classes on fathering and child development as well as conflict management and resolution. All provide information and also give fathers a chance to talk together about the challenges they face. The fathering classes, which last for 14 weeks, start with narratives, fathers sharing their own experiences with their fathers or father figures. In addition, Fathers—Now What is offered in partnership with a local hospital. Recognizing the role of mothers in promoting father involvement, the Center also offers a course for women, taught in partnership with the local women's resource agency. The course, called Being Our Fathers' Daughters, is designed to help women understand, using their own experience, how the loss of a father affects children.

For fathers who wish or require more supports, a strength-based care plan is developed. Such a plan might include mentoring—a dad with older children talking to one with younger children—videotaping father-child interactions, offering respite care, or counseling. The Center also tries to offer some fun activities to fathers and their children, such as barbecues and visits to the zoo. A number of support groups are also offered, including some for noncustodial fathers. Plans are in process for a teen fathers support group that will work collaboratively with staff already working with teen mothers on welfare.

Most recently, with the advent of welfare reform, the Center on Fathering has developed the Parent Opportunity Program of El Paso County (POPS), targeted to noncustodial parents, most of whom are fathers. Supported with funds from the state child support enforcement agency, the POPS program builds on the knowledge that more involved noncustodial parents are more likely to pay child support. To that end, the program engages in individualized intake assessment and case planning, makes referrals to the Center on Fathering as well as other community resources, and provides employment counseling and vocational rehabilitation referrals, peer support, supervised visitation, mediation, family counseling, and support services for custodial parents.

The Center also works closely with the county Visitation Center, which is located next door to the Center on Fathering. Supervised visitation is necessary for about 25 percent of the children in foster care, because of medical neglect, abuse, and other serious situations. When fathers are involved, the child welfare staff literally walk them over to the Center on Fathering to let them know of its existence and to help them make a connection that has proven important for many.

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* For more information contact: The Center on Fathering, 325 North El Paso Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80901; (719) 634-7797 or 1-800-MY DAD.

Source: Based on a site visit by Jane Knitzer.

Box 4.8

Baltimore, MD: Fathering Through a Local Lens

The Context

Probably more than any other city in the United States, Baltimore reflects the state of the art for emerging fatherhood programs. Baltimore has become a model for many communities across the country. An outstanding feature of Baltimore's fatherhood efforts is a high degree of communication and coordination among program sponsors and practitioners. In fact, some staff at Baltimore programs have gained national recognition and are in demand as speakers, workshop leaders, trainers, and consultants.

Baltimore has a strong history of father-focused services, which receive regular attention from the media and have generated broad public acceptance. The media coverage, along with word of mouth, has led to having men voluntarily approach the services provided. Between 2,000 and 3,000 fathers are served daily by the programs in Baltimore. This has allowed fatherhood services to become an integral part of the family services mix in the city.

Another aspect of the Baltimore efforts for fathers is that services are not one-dimensional, focusing solely on fathers as economic providers. Rather, they aim to promote nurturing as well. Further, Baltimore activities reach across the broad range of public institutions such as health, education, criminal justice, social welfare, and religious organizations.

Structure and Funding

There is strong leadership from the mayor's office, indicated by the designation of a Male Initiative within the Department of Social Services, which coordinates all father-focused services funded by the state and municipal government. There is also a core group of well-respected and well-coordinated community-based service providers who have experience with the delivery of services to men. State funding, supplemented by funds from foundations and corporations, is targeted for distribution at the community level, primarily for young and low-income fathers.

Major Programs

- *Baltimore Department of Social Services Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers.* The Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers Program is a statewide program sponsored by the state Department of Social Services and run by local coordinators. It is the core of the effort in Maryland to help young men avoid too-early fatherhood. Programs are designed to meet the individual needs of each local community served, while the state provides training and technical assistance on an ongoing basis. State- and community-level Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers coordinators belong to local organizations and participate in interagency and community planning processes. (See Chapter 5 of this report for more information on the Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers Program.)
- *Center on Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development, Inc. (CFWD—formerly Baltimore Healthy Start Men's Services/STRIVE).* CFWD is an expanded version of the nationally recognized Men's Services Program of Baltimore Healthy Start and Project Strive. Five separately funded programs make up CFWD: the Men's Services Program (a continuation of the nationally recognized program), Support and Training Results in Valuable Employees (STRIVE), the Sandtown Youth Haven Police Mini-Station (PAL), the Team Parenting Demonstration Program (funded by the Ford Foundation), and the Baltimore City Partners for Fragile Families (described in Chapter 5 of this report), which is expected to be added soon.
- *Baltimore City Mentoring Project.* This project is a product of the Baltimore Mentoring Institute, established in 1990. The initiative provides caring adults to work with disadvantaged youth. Mentors are recruited through more than 30 area churches, which provide about 20 male members each to act as mentors. Approximately 1,000 youth are served through this program.
- *St. Bernardine's Head Start and Early Head Start.* This program was highlighted in the 1997 edition of *Map and Track Fathers.* It is a program that empowers families to be the primary educators of their children and helps families to achieve economic self-sufficiency. There are services offered to fathers, mothers, and children. Fathers are offered assistance in employment searches, mediation, peer counseling, male parenting, and therapy. Services for mothers include parenting skills, adult education, and counseling. Childcare services are offered to both mothers and fathers. Education and family support is available to children. The program has been in operation since 1973 and has served fathers since 1983.

Source: Based on information from Jim Levine and Ed Pitt gathered for their forthcoming report on fatherhood in communities.

Conclusions

This chapter provides an overview of three state strategies to encourage responsible fatherhood as well as glimpses of county and city approaches. Among the states, although leadership strategies and auspices vary, along with the nature and extent of direct program activities supported, all share one common perspective: a vision of a broader definition of responsible fatherhood. Further, virtually all have used the available federal support creatively to promote the broader vision, supplemented, to varying (and sometimes limited) degrees, by state dollars. There are other states that have also taken a leadership role, albeit too few, but resources did not permit a visit to them. Nonetheless, even with this limited picture, it is clear that there is much more that most states might do than they are doing presently, even as it is clear that there are models and leaders who can help in the effort. The children can only be the beneficiaries.

Endnotes

1. Neria Cohen is largely responsible for the profiles of the three states. Jane Knitzer developed the profile of the El Paso County Center on Fathering and Stanley Bernard developed the profile of Baltimore, based on materials shared by Jim Levine and Ed Pitt at the Families and Work Institute from their forthcoming report.

2. Celluci, P. (1998). Massachusetts taking bold measures to strengthen families. *Fatherhood Today,* 3(1), p. 4.

3. *Ibid.*

4. State of Florida. (1997). *Florida vital statistics 1997 annual report.* Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Health.

5. WAGES is the states welfare program created by waiver prior to and continued under PRWORA.

6. An interesting recommendation that will be addressed in the Florida Legislature in 1999 illustrates the sensitivity and subtlety of changing society's attitude toward fatherhood. The Commission is recommending that the word "visitation" be removed from the statutes dealing with Family Law and be replaced with the word "access." As Mr. Buddy Witmer says: "We have let our language become a barrier—no parent wants to be considered a 'visitor' to his child.